

LV999 Villager

(LV999の村人)

Volume 02

Hoshitsuki kitten

(星月子猫)

Story Description:

In this world, the concept of levels exist. Other than those who live off defeating monsters, most people are only around Level 1 to 5. What's more, not just anyone can go out to hunt monsters; it's heavily influenced by one's role anointed by god.

There are eight such eligible roles. Warriors. Fighters. Clerics. Magicians. Rogues. Merchants. Hunters. Sorcerers.

Those blessed with extraordinary power are divided into three types. Royalty. Heroes. Sages.

But for the majority of the population, they have no such powers and live by farming or running shops. Towns are developed by those with the weakest role... Villagers.

For the powerless Villagers going out to hunt monsters is equivalent to committing suicide.

But one day, a certain two-year-old child given the role of Villager notices something.

Once you defeat a monster...you can earn great wealth.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 5: So That's Why I've Decided to Become A Cheapskate

Part 1

"No one else will be coming today...Our discussion about what to do concerning our roles before one week passes is now open."

They were sitting in a dim section of a bewitching bar, located at the corner of the residential area near Balman City's plaza. With a 'Dan,' Kagami struck the table with a serious look.

Kagami, Alice, Krul, and Tina were sitting at a table inside the bar while Takako, Menou, and Rex sat at the bar counter, silently looking at Kagami.

The Kenta-Uros were substituting for Takako, the bar owner, and stood behind the counter polishing glasses.

After Kagami announced the start of the meeting by striking the table, it remained silent for a while. Takako soundlessly raised her hand with a 'suu,' as if intending to destroy that silence.

"I...wish to be a Bunny Girl."

The moment Takako uttered those words, everyone there shivered.

They shivered so hard that a strange sweat appeared on their foreheads. Menou, who was sitting next to Takako, thought, 'Is she...serious,' in surprise after staring at Takako's figure when she raised her hand seriously and opened her mouth.

Regarding the Demon King's Army, one month had passed since the attack on Salumeria.

Kagami, who had released his limiter when he had fought Estellar and the Demon King Army, couldn't move his body for a day. By the next day though, he had healed enough to collect the gold that had been dropped by the Monsters in the Astro wasteland battlefield. Thanks to those hyenas who held no obligations towards Kagami, the money he had

collected didn't even amount to three Gold.

Of course, Kagami was known far and wide as one of the heroes who had saved Salumeria, and although he didn't feel the need to be honored, he, as well as Takako, Alice, and Menou, who accompanied him, were quickly thanked by the Salumerians before they had departed for the Demon King's Castle.

Rex's group had followed them to find the Demon King, but the Demon King's Castle had been completely deserted. The land that used to be covered by a violet-colored fog of dense magic power released from the Demon Castle and had been infested by Monsters that spawned from the dense magic, had become a normal, old castle built standing on top of a sheer cliff, bereft of fog and Monsters.

After all of that, Kagami's group only found some gems worth about 20 Gold. They had not encountered the Demon King nor Estellar, so they had restlessly returned to Balman, since they couldn't get anything done in Salumeria while being treated like heroes.

At the same time, Rex's group that had set out to subjugate the Demon King had lost their purpose and returned to Balman with Kagami, who was unable to proceed with his plans.

Regardless of the need to raise 10,000 Gold and whether they would defeat or save the Demon King, they predicted that, if they ended up fighting in a year, the battle would take place in Salumeria. Salumeria would sustain a large amount of damage at that time, so Rex's group decided to lend their power in order to collect the 10,000 gold.

Of course, since they no longer sought to defeat the Demon King, Rex's group had thoughts about obtaining knowledge concerning Kagami's origins while supporting him.

"First, let's begin with what we know, and then decide on how to proceed from here on with our own wills. Won't you share your knowledge?"

Kagami gladly agreed with those words and decided to aim for his large goal of 10,000 Gold. Palna was the only one who had disapproved of coexisting with Demons to the very end and planned to eliminate them.

“T-Takako-dono? I think there is a job more suitable for Takako-dono?”

“There is a job...besides being a Bunny Girl, that’s suitable for me?”

Looking at the energetic Takako who wanted to be a Bunny Girl, their shivering worsened.

Kagami’s group had immediately discussed how they would gather 10,000 Gold when they returned to Balman town. Currently, Kagami’s total assets were 5547 Gold. In other words, they just needed to gather the remaining 5000 Gold within a year. The plan Kagami had presented was to build a Casino.

The targets were rich nobles. If the rate of the Casino installments were high, they believed that their profits would be high as well. There was a risk regarding the Casino’s responsibilities. However, they were planning on using Games, since they were advantageous for Casinos.

Although they had considered asking for donations, when they had tried asking Krul, as a princess, it seemed that she didn’t have any confidence of being able to convince the upper crust to donate, even if she were to ask her father for a favor. Even though Krul had offered to store their strongest equipment and necessary items at the Guild before leaving on the journey, her offer had been rejected with “We can’t.”

After Takako’s input, Krul was once again asked to return to her kingdom with, “If you relay the present situation to them, will they fund us with some gold?” but she persistently responded that “They can’t.”

“Even though we were asked to subjugate the Demon King, what should we do since they won’t cooperate with us on the funding?”

Kagami voiced the conclusion that all of them had reached. Although they believed the kingdom might have a link to the world’s ploy as stated by Estellar, without any way to prove it, they had no other choice but to collect the 10,000 Gold.

The cost of constructing a Casino was 546 Gold. They needed to earn around 5000 Gold in the remaining year.

Following Kagami’s observations, they concluded that it would be

impossible to earn 5000 Gold by just managing an ordinary Casino.

Although there were various plans for other forms of labor, for now, they had gathered together in order to organize the Casino's management before the week ended.

"Takako-dono...I think it's fine for you to manage a bar within the Casino."

"Well, Menou-chan? Would you mind being the shop manager?"

Menou stuttered from Takako's question. Kagami had been lucky enough to discover another spawn blocker, so Menou was provided with a cloth to suppress his magic power like Alice.

It had become possible for Menou to live amongst humans, and he had been leading an ordinary life this past month, giving Alice an allowance from his savings and helping with Takako's bar.

"They will be Takako's Bunny Girls. I think she would be too 'exciting' for guys. Having too much excitement is bad for one's education. Truly."

Kagami replied to Takako's serious proposal in an equally serious manner.

"I-I also think Takako-san's Bunny Girl appearance would be too exciting...for various reasons."

"Oh...even Alice-chan? That's right...my sex appeal would be too great."

Alice replied with, "Yeah...That's right," without looking at her.

In the last month, Alice had accompanied Kagami on a journey to collect gold. They had been inseparable, like siblings, and she had continued supporting him under the pretense of "it is for Kagami."

Although Kagami had initially believed that she would become a burden, he felt like she had ended up helping him, since she was skilled.

"Let's see...Me being a Bunny Girl would be bad for the eyes, right?"

"That's right, I'll leave the management of the Bar to you since the clients would end up poisoned by seeing such a sight."

In the end, after Kagami emphasized that, Takako consented with, “It can’t be helped,” while letting out a sigh.

“The Bunny Girl position will be handed over to Krul-chan, then.”

“Eh!? No, I-I will never wear such a shameless outfit!?”

“Then what do you plan to do?”

“I’ll decide on that from here on out!”

Krul yelled at Takako with her face dyed a deep red.

In the past month, Krul had stayed in Balman town while completing tasks such as accompanying Alice and Kagami as a Healer, helping out at Takako’s bar, and helping with the Casino’s construction. Although she had been raised as royalty, because she had the constitution of an adventuring Adventurer, she had easily adapted to living like a commoner.

Part 2

“...Please don’t look this way.”

“Huh? But I think it’s fine on Tina-chan. Your style is nice, even though your body is small...I think it suits you.”

Slightly angered by the reference to her stature, Tina turned her eyes away and clearly declared, “I’ll refuse since I’m petite!”

For the last month, Tina had resided in the Church, which was beyond the residential area on the north side of Balman, and led a life of Dungeon diving in a party with Kagami’s group, as well as giving individual guidance to lost children each day.

“It’s hopeless for Tina-Tina. I don’t know of anything else you could do, other than being a Bunny Girl.”

“I’m not...Tina-Tina. Anyways, what is it you want me to do?”

“Become a Pope.”

“Huh? I’m sorry, I didn’t hear you well. What was it you said you want me to do?”

“Become a Pope.”

Tina hung her head slightly and considered it while muttering, “A Pope is...umm, in other words,” in a serious manner.

“You want me...to start a religion?”

“That’s exactly right, Pope-sama.”

“I refuse.”

In response to Tina’s definite reply, Kagami stood up from his seat and muttered, “This is...are you kidding me?” and looked as if he couldn’t believe her.

“I’m taking this seriously! Rather, what is a Pope?”

“It’s that. Tina would help save the impure hearts of those people who keep on losing and losing in the Casino. You would sell them Luck-Up

Items that would make them come back to the Casino.”

Kagami didn't notice everyone's dumbfounded condition and continued to speak. He proposed the tag-line, “The world has changed ever since I joined Tina's Religion. I come to the Casino everyday. I've also won the lottery!” and everyone continued to be at a loss for words regarding the new Religion.

To summarize Kagami's statements, he had just proposed a crafty way to make money by creating a Church within the Casino.

“Must you earn money by using the God that I serve!?”

“Stupid Tina! Tina is Stupid! For now, we're saving up gold to ultimately beat the crap out of the Gods. In other words, since we're already planning to beat them up, it's not strange to use them to earn gold! They're our enemies after all! Same as the Monsters!”

“No...Well, doesn't that deny the reason I exist?”

“And whatnot-ugh.”

Afterwards, the result of repeated negotiation was that Tina had consented to establish a Church within the Casino and promote Accessories related to Luck-Up, which were beneficial to the Casino, while progressing with her normal work.

“So, Shishou, what should I do?”

The next one to ask that was Rex as he stood up from his seat at the counter and approached Kagami.

“Hmm, Chikky-kun, won't you stop calling me Shishou?”

“Then stop calling me Chikky.”

Ever since the attack on Salumeria a month ago, Rex had persistently called Kagami, ‘Shishou.’ He wished to learn various things at Kagami's side in order to change his way of living.

Rex, who had lived bound by the Role of Hero, destined to subjugate the Demon King, had longed for Kagami's straightforward lifestyle, which wasn't bound by his Role. He was determined to observe Kagami's way of

life in order to discover what he truly wanted to do. As proof of his determination, despite not receiving any teachings, Rex had been calling Kagami, Shishou.

It was normally impossible for a Hero to want to be taught by a Villager. It would destroy their personal values. It was unknown whether he was happy due to his new attitude of wanting to improve, but he had been doing many things with Kagami without complaining as he called him Shishou.

“Rex...I’m ordering you as your Shishou. If you stop calling me Shishou...! I will confer upon you a full mastery!”

“Don’t misunderstand. I’m calling you Shishou because I respect you, but we are of equal standing. I’m calling you Shishou freely because I just want to observe your way of life.

“Eh? Aren’t we bad?”

“That’s why you’re helping me with various things in exchange for that, right? Speaking of gathering 10,000 gold, that Demon man... I want to know the meaning of Estellar’s true intentions.”

“Yosh, well then, you’ll be on toilet duty.”

“Hold up, Shishou.”

After several minutes, Kagami finished discussing with Rex about the distribution of Roles. In the middle of this, Alice had continued to observe Kagami and Rex’s unsightly debate, while happily thinking about how a Demon such as herself was mixed in with them.

“Then Alice will be on toilet duty.”

“Please wait for a moment Kagami-san.”

At the end of their discussion, Alice interjected with a serious look.

This time, the discussion wasn’t just between Kagami and Rex, Tina, Krul, and Alice were involved as well, and they were bickering loudly. Observing this scene, Takako and Menou, who were still seated at the counter, smiled.

“By the way, Kagami-chan. Although this seems like a fundamental issue, do we have enough people for this with just us?”

Takako asked Kagami, who was still mired in the conversation of Role distribution. He showed her a troubled expression, as if trying to recall something, and then, with a serious look, said:

“Not at all.”

Is what he replied.

Takako was easily able to understand his response.

Kagami’s total assets totaled 5547 Gold. With this amount, 847 gold was used for the construction fees and set up costs. Kagami’s current total assets were 5000 Gold. He had reached this amount after collecting 300 Gold from defeating Monsters and accepting Quests in the past month. Their urgent goal was to gather the remaining 5000 Gold within the remaining 11 months.

He felt regretful that he hadn’t gone all out in saving his money before, since it looked like “it might be possible if we had two years to do it”.

Anyways, since it was impossible to gather 5000 Gold in a year through normal means, Kagami had proposed building a Casino. It was an evil proposal to have the Guild members, Adventurers, and Nobles spend a lot of their saved up money.

Speaking of being able to do anything if one had an income; although the Casino would be the main attraction, inside would be several entertainment facilities, such as Restaurants, Bars, Taverns, Tina’s Church, Public Baths, and etc.

Even though they would be managing a large-scale Casino, they clearly didn’t have enough people.

Facing the sea, the town of Balman was huge. It was prosperous enough to have plenty of Merchants, Mercenaries, Adventurers, and fellow Guild members gathered.

When a Casino seeks to target a Kingdom’s nobles and the people that

gather in such a huge town as clients, it becomes necessary to build such a large-scale Casino. As a result, they had purchased a piece of land surrounding a portion of unused port, and had built a Casino facing the sea around one-twentieth the size of Balman.

“I thought we would somehow be able to do it with our spirits.”

“Since that has yet to happen, aren’t we in a hurry now? We need to gather more hands quickly, right? What have we been doing... in this past month?”

“Well, umm... entering Dungeons... umm... and beating the crap... out of Monsters.”

As a sole proprietor, Takako began to scold Kagami who sat in seiza. With their outlook on the present situation full of troubles, everyone, except for Kagami, let out a deep sigh.

Part 3

“That’s right. If it’s Krul, won’t you be able to bring in a lot of guys from the castle? If we explain the situation to them, there shouldn’t be any issues in bringing off-duty soldiers and servants with free time, right?”

Kagami suggested this and clapped his hands as if he had finally remembered something.

“...I think it’s impossible. Although it’s to prevent an all out war with the Demons...if it’s Father...”

After saying that, Krul gloomily went silent. Kagami, who somehow understood when looking at her unsettled countenance, tilted his head with a ‘gurin’ and looked at Takako.

“It can’t be helped...Even now, we don’t have any way to do it.”

Takako said with a sigh, as if she had similarly understood.

The ones who had pushed for the defeat of Demons and Monsters were originally the humans of the Kingdom. Even if they were to lend their power to avoid an all out war with the Demons, if they told them about the situation, then they would probably be forced to face the war head-on and repel them.

It would be cruel to ask a favor of Krul, who had gradually begun to appreciate the relationship between Demons and humans, when she already knew the outcome.

“So? What method will we use, Takako-san?”

Alice asked the always dependable Takako, full of expectation.

“There’s a plaza to recruit party members in Balman, right? It’s fine if we look for casino employees there.”

“I see...but it’s really just Adventurers in this town, you know? I don’t think we will be able to gather enough competent people to work at a casino immediately that way.”

“That’s not so? There are a lot of villagers in the residential area, so it’ll

depend on their labor situation. It might be possible for such people to want to work together with the charismatic Rex-chan and Krul-chan.”

After Takako said that, Rex and Krul turned away slightly, as if declining. Krul looked towards the bay window, and Rex mistakenly stared at the Kenta-Uros behind the counter.

“Humans, ugh. I understand the ones who turn towards us with their looks of envy, longing to be existences with high charisma like us. However, it’s impossible for standard trashy playboys with golden hair like you. Give up.”

“So noisy.”

Rex, whose presence was deemed unpleasant, once again looked at Kagami’s group. Besides Krul, everyone gazed at Rex intently, and Rex let out a sigh of resignation.

“I mainly recruited party members at the plaza in order to defeat the Demon King. To try to recruit people to become casino employees, who would only quit soon after, is a bit...”

“The problem is their pride. They will be bound by that, even though it would be boring. They’re going through great pains to forge a new path, right? Isn’t it a good step towards a different path of life from now on?”

Kagami shook his head left and right with a yareyare as if it was useless. Rex showed a distressed look; Krul, however, seemed perfectly fine and only showed a bitter expression, free of worry.

“What’s wrong, Krul-san?”

Seeing her expression, Alice raised her voice in worry.

“I’m...a human of the royal family. If I try to recruit people to be casino employees as the head of the nation, there is a possibility that they will be disillusioned...If that happened, it would surely cause inconveniences, not to me, but to the royal family.”

Alice somehow understood the problem after listening to her words. Although the issue was still pride, like with Rex, it was worrisome since it

wasn't an issue of individual pride, but the pride of others. If they were blocked by this, there was a possibility of offending someone they didn't have any control over.

"It can't be helped. I'm plenty happy for you guy to just help me out on this."

".....Kagami-san."

Relieved by these words, Krul smiled.

"It's fine if we let Rex do the recruitment advertising. He'll quit being a Hero and begin to work as an Idol. He'll be working together with us in the casino, so won't everyone try it out? Let's go gather people we like."

"Fah!?"

"Although I've just mentioned an appropriate idea, it might have been a bit too sudden. Anyhow, Rex is an ikemen and has the qualities of an idol...Yes, let's go with this."

"W-Wait a moment Shishou! I haven't had a say in this at all! A Hero becoming an idol? I haven't heard of such an idiotic and unprecedented story before!"

Rex hurriedly approached Kagami about his crazy idea.

"Idols are great. Heroes also really look like idols. Would you rather they call you hot and sexy, or go kyaa~kyaa~? Which would you pick from as a girl; a Hero or a strong ikemen idol?"

"H-...hot and sexy? Kyaa...kyaa...A choice...between...the two?"

As if he had been completely brainwashed, Rex gulped at Kagami's words and looked at Krul, Tina, and Alice who were gazing at him coldly.

"Speaking of idols, a character's role is important you know, what kind of setting should we use? For now, when we talk with each other, we will open ourselves with an "Ehehe...", while we cleverly present ourselves, we will laugh with "Geebubebahaha! Kopoo!" and our debut song will be 'The Bottomless Swamp.' Let's go with this."

"A dark...character! As expected, Rex-san is cute with that."

Tina unintentionally retorted after listening to that unclear concept of a character. However, after he had perceived the phrase, “girls speak of ‘motemote’”, Rex had been paralyzed with the sensation of becoming an idol and said, “Idols aren’t...bad.”

After this, Menou proposed, “Wouldn’t it be better to work towards gathering people, instead of conversing amongst ourselves like this?”, so Kagami headed towards the plaza with Rex, Alice, and Tina.

Part 4

Normally one could recruit workers in the town using a Recruiter's Notice, which was placed in the same area where the Guild would issue Quests. So, it was normal for the bulletin board at the town plaza, where the Guild was located, to be filled with notices from people who wished to be employed.

Even Adventurers would use the Recruiter's Notice board to gather a party. However, when party members were desperate to complete quests and it was necessary to recruit urgently, the recruitment would be done in the same way Rex had done it: by giving a speech and forming a party right then and there.

"Well, as expected. Not a single person has shown up."

"We gathered a lot of attention though...Well, they are Adventurers for the most part."

Putting her elbows on her knees, Tina supported the statement that Kagami, who was sitting on a bench in a corner of the plaza, had made, and let out a sigh.

Alice, who was in a good mood, was sitting on the bench next to Kagami, licking her ice cream with a 'peropero' and dangling her feet with a 'purapura' while gazing at Rex, who was desperately trying to recruit.

Currently, Rex was delivering a speech by himself with his status window open, revealing his Hero Role. Since making him into an Idol right now would have an adverse effect, for the moment, they had decided to garner the attention of the people passing by in the plaza using his Role as Hero, instead of using Tina's proposal.

However, even though he did gather their attention, most of the Adventurers stopped paying attention to him once the topic turned to labor.

That was quite natural, since those who decided to work could only receive the agreed upon wages over a long period of time. Although there was no risk to their lives, for Adventurers with the strength to fight,

earning money this way could only be called inefficient.

Although there were many Heroes, it was a separate issue once labor was brought up, and those who had gathered would end up dispersing one by one the minute they heard that. The ones who were listening to Rex, who was desperately saying, “Want to discover an amazing and unprecedented life at a casino together with me, a Hero?”, were mostly Villagers.

“But the remaining Villagers probably don’t know why they’ve joined the gathering. They only appear to have a slight interest, since none of them have spoken yet.”

“I don’t know about this...the wages surely aren’t that bad, but maybe recruiting a lot all of them at once is suspicious, and that, with his Role of Hero, it’s too far out of reach?”

“Well then, is it better if I try to persuade them?”

“Kagami-san is even more suspicious, you know. As a Villager, you’re rich and you’re Level 999...This degree of suspiciousness could only be questionable.”

Depressed by Tina’s harsh words, Kagami looked for the reason why people weren’t talking in the present situation.

They required 20 males and 20 females. They would work eight hours shifts. The job description for available jobs included Casino Dealers, bar employees, and the like. There were all kinds of cleaning jobs as well. Wages would be 50 Silver a month, and compared to the Club Takako-chan managed, the wage for this work was higher by 5 Silver.

In this world, where the wages of servants and maids and the like who worked daily was said to be 100 Silver even if they weren’t cultured, to the capable Villagers, a monthly wage of 50 Silver was quite high for a job that ignored their career history and true abilities.

Even if one worked at an inn or an izakaya for a period of three years, one could only receive a wage of 35 Silver per month. Even though it was written that there was an initial salary of 50 Silver with opportunities for a

raise, nobody tried to gather around.

“Why...even though it’s written that we would treat people with capable Roles well, and would even grant an increase in their wages if they prove their ability...why? Is it because I’m a not Idol? Is it useless for me to become one?”

“It would be the same, even if you were an idol. Rather than asking why, you don’t have any choice but to be one...Rex-san’s charisma is, rather...surprisingly low? If it’s labor conditions, within Balman, 50 Silver isn’t that bad.”

“TinaTina. Don’t say these things so casually. Even as a joke, he’s still a Hero, you know.”

“I don’t want to hear that from someone who tried to debut with a Bottomless Swamp song.”

As these two spoke with each other, the people around Rex, who was giving his speech, gradually dispersed. Amongst the people leaving, there were those who were disappointed, saying, “That Hero-sama who gave up on the Demon King subjugation is trying to work at such a store,” and those who were excited for the Casino replied with, “But it was that Hero-sama who built the Casino so suddenly. I’ll go enjoy it, even though I don’t want to help.”

“Alice...give me a good idea. The one that always guides me during troubling times is you.”

Tina looked at Kagami with an “...Uwaah~”, as if she were disappointed with his suddenly unreasonable behavior.

“Somehow...I realize that I know the other Villager’s feelings.”

Alice muttered that unexpectedly, without showing her troubled behavior, as she gathered the gazes of Rex and the Villagers gathered in the middle of the plaza.

“And? What will you say about it?”

“If it were me, I would be scared. It’s because I have the courage...to step

into a place I don't know. In the beginning, I was just a bit scared when I came to this town with Kagami-san, you know?"

To those words, Kagami made an agreeable response of, "...I see."

Certainly, it was enough to count the number of Casinos in this world, and even if one were to say they were employed in such a place, it was difficult to recall a precise image of the kind of work someone would do.

If people were unable to imagine themselves in a workplace, it might be easy for them to become scared, since fear was a natural reaction to try to preserve themselves while working in the present reality.

This seemed to apply to social relationships as well. One's heart would deteriorate if they were stressed by working at a dark, demon-like workplace everyday, and even if the pay was good, it was predestined that humans would feel anxious if they lacked the will to work there.

"Alice...is a genius! You really are the best. I overlooked such a simple thing!"

Kagami, who had overlooked an unexpected psychological problem, highly praised Alice, and after that, he stroked her head. Kagami then stood up from the bench as if he had immediately decided on his next course of action.

"What do you mean?"

Tina asked Kagami for a solid solution.

"For now, let's go collect the notice with our labor conditions and remake it."

"In what way?"

"I will add a description under the work conditions that will show that they will be able to work peacefully in the workplace. Let's see..."

Kagami muttered that while his group went to the Guild's receptionist, this was the content of what was added:

『It's a cozy workplace. Everyone is gentle and very healthy. There are already seven staff members who enjoy working for the casino opening.

The staff comments have entries such as ‘It’s a bright and enjoyable workplace,’ ‘Girls were also hired,’ ‘Everyday has been a Disney Day since I came here,’ ‘I’ve also won the lottery.’ 』

“So suspicious!”

Tina yelled out, utterly amazed as she read the description that could only have an adverse effect.

“This description is way too suspicious! This recruitment advertisement is practically the embodiment of Kagami-san! What the hell are you learning from, Alice-chan, for sentences like these to appear!”

“You’re lying, right? That’s impossible! Don’t these lines perfectly conceptualize peace of mind!?”

Alice sighed with a ‘yareyare’ after seeing the two of them yell at each other in front of the Guild’s Quest receptionist. However, she soon remembered the path she was taking, one step at a time, to create the world she dreamed of, and smiled.

“That’s...quite a smile you’re sporting. Completely like an angel.”

It was at this time that a man looked down at her from behind, as if glaring, and said that in a subdued voice.

No matter how you looked at the man with lifeless eyes, he looked like the servant of a noble. He was a 40 year old man dressed in a suit with shoulder-length wavy, black hair in the noble’s fashion, and a dandy-like beard that extended from his nose in a tidy manner.

“...Who is it?”

Alice’s body stiffened at the sudden voice. The man, who had come to talk about something, glared so sharply at Alice that she could feel his hatred.

“I’m sorry for my tardiness...I’m called David Forren. I’m a servant for the royal family of the Hexal Doria Kingdom.”

After David introduced himself, he faced Alice and displayed his Status Window. What was displayed was his Level, Level 77, and his Role,

Merchant.

Then, the two who had been conversing noticed David, who had tried to touch Alice, and looked at him.

Kagami looked at this normal looking servant, who had a decent enough ability to be an Adventurer, dubiously.

After this, David, who had noticed Kagami's gaze, bowed politely, as if he knew him. He then turned towards him and while showing a daring smile–

“...I've come to pick up Krul-sama.”

This is what was muttered.

Part 5

For several seconds, Kagami and David glared at each other without saying anything. As if the two of them were trying to probe for the other's intentions, they continued to stare at each other and observe each other's attitudes without moving a step. In the next moment–

“Quest Guild Staff-san! This person!”

Kagami yelled out and pointed at David.

“This old man daringly looked at this innocent young lady here as if he was going to lick her! While we're at it, me as well! He's a pervert, no matter how you look at him. I'm truly thankful.”

“Fuehhi!?”

David sputtered upon hearing the sudden, inconceivable words yelled out. The Quest Guild Staff members who were in the surroundings, as well as the Adventurers that had stopped by for a brief visit and the Villagers who were trying to issue Quests, all looked at David immediately.

“Y-You're wrong. I-I!”

When Kagami protected the little girl and took the chance to separate from David, who had let his guard down, the misunderstanding that an attractive middle-aged man had tried to lay his hands on her was produced.

“Hey, hey...are you in the middle of the forest, hiding behind a tree? Doing a criminal act in a place with such a large amount of witnesses...”

“Look at that person, his eyes are dead. No matter how you look at him he has the face of a criminal. To deceive such a cute girl...What on earth is he thinking?”

“I had thought he was strange you know. Now that I think about that person, he entered this place slowly without making a sound, and he did come to a stop behind that girl. Aah...I got a bad feeling.”

“He stinks. He's a stinky guy. So stinky.”

Even though the guys in the surrounding hadn't really looked at him, they said what they wanted without reserve.

"You. Can you come over here for a bit?"

"Y-You're wrong! I haven't done anything...really!"

David was then taken by the two hard-faced Adventurers, hired as security inside the Quest Guild, who tightly grasped both of his arms.

After that, Kagami yelled, "Now, let's run away!", seizing the opportunity to flee from the area before things became troublesome.

Although Tina and Alice tried to leave the Quest Guild behind Kagami, Alice stopped to look at David, who continued to deny his charges and argue that he was caught without reason, and,

"Release that person for me. That person hasn't done anything, you know.

Instead of running away and leaving things as they were, she asked the two hired Adventurers to release David, who was at their side. The two Adventurers and the surrounding people were bewildered by these unexpected actions and David looked at her in surprise, as if he admired her and wanted to say something.

More than anyone else, it was Kagami who received the greatest shock as he said, "Huhhh~?"

"Kagami-san. Although I do think that your spur-of-the-moment actions were in consideration for Krul-san, I think it's bad for me to act in such a way. He might have looked at me with his perverted eyes, but I think it's wrong to punish someone who has yet to do anything."

"My heart hurts hearing too fair of a judgement. What is this?"

Although the two hired Adventurers had yet to decide what to do, they released David's arms after listening to Alice's testimony.

The surrounding people who had jeered at him didn't really know what they should do and couldn't follow-up on anything, so they simply dispersed as though they had gone too far to retreat.

“Goodness gracious...this was surprising. Hmm...anyways, you’ve saved me. Allow me to express my thanks. To be honest...you have such a splendid appearance at your young age.”

The released David stood before Alice and bowed deeply to her, and then he smiled at her, appearing really happy this time. Seeing this, Alice smiled back at him.

Seeing this smile unexpectedly made him mutter “...Hoh,” and appear as if he wanted to say something. His expression turned difficult, as if he was reflecting on something.

“Well, I’ll leave my thoughts for later...are you strange in the head? I’ve wanted to inform Krul-sama about something.”

David said he would postpone his thoughts for later after looking at Kagami, who was moving his head to the side, with a ‘gurin’, as if he had recalled something.

“You’re quite sharp. Kagami-san’s head is indeed strange. It’s so strange that he tried to debut a Hero as an Idol. Well...I willingly ended up getting used to such words as well.”

After Tina replied to David, she apologized to him with a bow, as if she were responsible for Kagami’s actions.

David bowed and said, “No, don’t worry about it,” and just as they made peace with each other, Tina, Alice, and David simultaneously looked at Kagami dubiously.

“Well...it seemed annoying to get involved...and if you had something with Krul, I thought you would have an ulterior motive since you came to us even though it would have been fine to meet Krul directly...”

“Hou...I see. I didn’t mean to make an excuse for you to run away without considering anything. Well done. As you might have guessed, I’ve come with plans for everyone. Though, I didn’t think I would be treated as a pervert.”

David laughed happily as he said that.

Kagami's group, who had yet to understand what he meant, decided to talk at a cafe in the plaza nearby after joining up with Rex, who had returned in order to find out why David had come.

"I can't believe David-dono is here...It's been a long time since I've seen you."

"It has been a while, Rex-sama...I'm relieved to see you are as healthy as ever."

When Rex saw David after arriving at the plaza, he had lost his cool and yelled out, "Why are you here!?", as though his arrival was completely unexpected.

Unexpectedly, Rex and David were acquainted with each other.

Part 6

Presently, Kagami's group was with David. In order from right to left, Kagami, Alice, Rex, and Tina were sitting in chairs across from David. Amongst them, only Rex seemed sullen and had his arms folded, seemingly unable to calm down.

"Do you understand...why I have come here?"

David, who was holding a coffee cup in one of his hands, muttered that while giving Rex a sharp look.

"Krul...You've come to take back the Princess, right? A lot of time has passed since we started staying in this town. It's not strange for someone to report that to the Royal Capital."

Rex instantly shared his guess with a troubled look.

"It's just as you've guessed. As expected of Rex-sama, you have keen senses."

David said that with a sigh as he brought the coffee cup to his mouth and then put it down on the plate. Rex lowered his head in embarrassment after David spoke.

"Will the two of you be serious and stop bantering? In other words, what do you mean by that? What's your explanation?"

As if he didn't understand what he was saying at all, Kagami, who seemed uninterested, asked while he sucked on the straw of his Melon Soda.

Seemingly sharing the same opinion, Alice and Tina nodded in agreement, saying "Yeah, yeah," with their faces smeared with cream from the parfaits they had ordered.

"Speaking of the report, the Villager that deceived Rex-sama and Krul-sama...it's you, right?"

"A report? Although I don't really understand those things, I'm Kagami Kouji. As you know, I'm a Villager."

After this, Kagami introduced the two people next to him, saying, “The little ones who appear to be nothing but children next to me are Alice and Tina, whose face is covered in cream.” As if he recognized the two, David bowed without changing his expression at all.

“I know. I’ve heard about them from my subordinate’s report.”

“I mean, what exactly is this report you speak of? Although you’ve said you will take Krul back, please explain everything, including this.”

“Bringing back Princess-sama...Krul-sama, is the truth. However, my original purpose was to talk to you about your behavior that has gone astray.”

Not just Kagami, but Rex was bewildered as well.

“What do you mean by that David-dono? If you looked into the reports you received from your subordinates, don’t you know enough about our actions for the Demon King subjugation?”

“Although it was mentioned earlier, Rex-sama has been living in this town. Don’t you have some sort of reason for it? One of the reports I’ve heard from my subordinates is: ‘Currently searching for the unknown whereabouts of the Demon King, and although they have yet to go on a journey to subjugate him, they are spending day after day for some type of goal without neglecting their training.’”

Listening to this, Kagami agreed with an “Ah, I see.” In the last month, Kagami’s group had stayed in Balman and completed Quests to gather gold and defeat Monsters. Whether it was intended as camouflage, Kagami concluded that those who saw him reported that they were trying to get stronger and cooperate with each other.

In reality, since there were days where they acted separately, Rex and Krul had only raised their Levels slightly.

“I’ve come here to confirm this. Could it be that you’ve given up on the Demon King subjugation to spend time here in Balman? Furthermore, Krul-sama is the Princess of the whole country. She is already His Majesty’s precious daughter, and although I will bring her back...if that

isn't going to happen peacefully, I will have to bring her back forcibly. As a Sage, using Krul-sama for the Demon King subjugation is a top priority after all."

After this was said, David once again brought his coffee cup to his mouth. At this moment, Kagami quickly stared down Rex in a contest, and then he immediately displayed his status window and showed David his Level.

"That's exactly right! We're pretending that we've given up on subjugating the Demon King and have been making our preparations! Rather than spending time searching for the Demon King's unknown whereabouts, we will wait for him to appear since it's faster and we'll be strong enough to give him a vicious beating!"

Kagami turned serious as he said that. After listening to David's story, he concluded that, 'Ah, he's quite the troublesome guy, to talk about this,' and acted out accordingly, in order to adapt to David's story.

To be honest, regardless of the fact that they didn't have enough people on hand, he concluded that he didn't wish for Krul to return to the castle because of personal reasons like, 'It's too painful for Krul to disappear' or 'It will be problematic for Krul to consider things later on, after having begun to understand Demons, if she goes to an unreachable place.'

"That's right! It doesn't mean that we've given up on the Demon King subjugation for sure! We've been training and getting stronger at Shishou's side to defeat the Demon King as soon as he appears!"

Rex stood up and said that as if to support Kagami's actions.

"I've heard about it. I've already received a report on the events in Salumeria. It appears you were very successful, and I can't believe there is a Villager who has arrived to such a stage...and although you might defeat the Demon King soon, why are you trying to manage a Casino in this town? The report also mentions that Krul-sama and Rex-sama are also trying to work in this Casino."

David accused Kagami while looking at him dubiously, as if waiting for him to expose himself. Although Rex showed a painful look for a moment,

as if he felt guilty, Kagami's eyes hardened.

“You fool! Don't underestimate a Villager's weakness! It's still unreasonably weak, even at Level 999!”

He said as he struck the table with a 'dan', seemingly angry at being the victim.

“A great success at Salumeria? You know we were finally able to pull it off somehow after receiving much support from Krul and powerful magic from the other Adventurer's, right? As for that subordinate of the Demon King, we will never defeat him if he's with the Demon King! That's why we will save up our gold and buy powerful equipment. If we have gold we will be able to increase our number of companions and arrange equipment for them...This is perfect, isn't it? In exchange for helping Krul and Rex become stronger, they're helping me out with this.”

Tina was slightly surprised and let out and “uwoh,” as if she had started to vomit due to the lie this chatterbox had come up with. Kagami's face seemed to dare David to doubt him.

In reality, this lie was plausible.

There was no leaked information that spoke of the Demon King himself showing up in the Battle of Salumeria. It was just his subordinate that attacked. This lie about the reason for managing a Casino could already be interpreted as a more effective way to save up gold, now that the Demon King wasn't here.

“I see...was that the case? For the time being, there is a number of equipment valued at more than 1000 Gold (TN:It uses 1000 here, not 10k) that you can buy as you pass through the Quest Guild, right? According to the legend from ancient times, those things must not be passed onto people who do not have the ability to wield them. They are items that can only be purchased with your own power. Knowing this, it must mean that you're trying to gather up gold through this method.”

Due to not knowing this at all, everyone present recognized that this way of exposing information was just like Krul and thought, “As expected of Krul's servant,” when they heard information that not even Krul, who had

a relationship with the royal family, knew.

‘She still didn’t have the ability to wield one, even though her body has undergone training since childhood,’ Kagami retorted in his mind while he listened to the reason why her father, the King, was unable to receive these weapons. David had more words to share:

“If you’re planning on doing that...then let me help out as well!”

That’s right, these unexpected words came from David.

At these unexpected words, Kagami thought, “Eh? Is this lie continuing?”, and everyone involved in the mess shivered.

Part 7

“Uwah~ So happy~! But, we have enough people, so no thanks.”

Kagami immediately showed him a hateful look, as if claiming ‘You’ll be in the way if you come with us.’

“Oya? I witnessed you trying to recruit more people though?”

When David replied with an expression that seemed to say ‘I thought you said something like that’, Kagami clicked his tongue with a ‘tch’.

“It’s your choice either way. Even if you don’t let me help you out, I’ve decided to remain by your side as an observer. This order was passed down from the King, who said that I must observe whether or not you are telling the truth, and if your efforts are insufficient, I will take her back.”

“Having to live our daily lives under surveillance is stressful.”

“Please don’t say that. The only observer will be me, and in exchange for this, I’ll help out with Kagami-sama’s work, you know? That is what I’m suggesting.”

Kagami momentarily showed a difficult expression when this was said. Kagami honestly wanted to avoid spending time in this manner, maintaining the situation with his lie, from now on.

While Kagami was thinking about whether or not there would be another method to make him return without being his observer, David took out a piece of parchment and placed it on top of the table.

As for what Kagami’s group had created, on top of it were the lines they had written to recruit people for the Casino. Seeing this, Tina leaned towards the table and began to read its content.

“‘Warmly welcoming Beginners. Offering a suitable environment to work in for people who are new to working at Casinos. Training period will be for one month, and wages will be dependent on one’s abilities’... How would you prepare such a thing?”

“I am a servant of Krul-sama before I am your observer. Seeing that it’s necessary to recruit a number of personnel for everyone, I considered the

possibilities and made preparations beforehand.”

After David replied with a smile towards Tina, Kagami took the recruiter’s form and began to read it, as if confirming it. Kagami knit his brows since the content wasn’t really different from what he had written himself.

“What is this trying to say?”

“Please try recruiting one more time using this. I’m sure people will gather without you having to give a speech.”

David smiled at him once again as he said that. Seeing this, Kagami stood up from his seat while saying, “Haha, no way.” He then left the store with the notice in hand, while half thinking, “It’s useless.”

Since the reality was that people hadn’t gathered around, even though they had posted a Recruiter’s Notice, Kagami, who was considering trying this, at least mass produced the Recruiter’s Form that David had prepared at the Quest Guild, posted it at the Quest Guild and at the plaza notice board, prepared a kiosk near the plaza benches with a billboard that said ‘Recruiting Casino Employees,’ and continued to wait for people to come.

//

Two hours later. Villagers who lived in Balman and Adventurers had lined up in front of the kiosk established in front of the plaza benches.

Although it didn’t mean that everyone had hopes for labor, for now, compared to the time when Rex had been giving his speeches, people who were showing an interest had gathered around wanting to listen and considered joining.

“What’s the meaning of this?”

Tina, who had been in charge of the kiosk, began to diligently ask the people who had come what their agenda was, one at a time. Kagami was standing next to the people who were being processed and hoping for an interview date, and his mouth was wide open as he muttered that.

“I just mentioned things like a workplace they can work peacefully in,

you know.”

“Then, it wasn’t wrong to think about a cozy workplace?”

After Kagami said this, he slapped Alice, who was looking at the formed line with a surprised expression, on her back while saying, “As expected of Alice-tan.”

“I think that may be so. In other words, it’s important for people to be able to work peacefully. Since the contents of the Recruiter’s Form prepared by Kagami-san was suspicious, it couldn’t be helped that the people who didn’t understand its contents would feel anxious about whether they could work properly or not. By specifying the training period, and additionally clarifying the kind of work done in the Casino, we have given a proper account to those who desire working hours. We have also hidden a number of positions. It will be fine if we just manage people after choosing from the recruits that come. If that number is limited, we will end up thinking that no one besides us will be able to work there, and it will get crowded. By simply handing out these pieces of information, we will remove the insecurity they feel for the job.”

After receiving this explanation, Kagami faced David and:

“You, you’re hired.”

He muttered only those words while wearing his biggest smile. At that moment, Rex grabbed onto Kagami’s shoulder, and with a frightening speed, he separated them from David by a distance. Although Alice and David gazed at the two of them suspiciously, Rex didn’t mind them and approached Kagami’s ears as if he was going to tell him a secret.

“What the hell are you saying, Shishou! Although he’s an observer, if he makes an appearance at our workplace, we will be exposed by him! Without him, we would be able to talk in secret at our workplace later on.”

“It’s the opposite, the opposite. That old man’s eyes aren’t really that shrewd, you know? As for whether he will see through us, neglecting him would be rather dangerous, since we won’t know what he is doing. We can enjoy ourselves the most if he isn’t an observer. At any rate, he’s the one observing us.”

After Kagami said that with a sigh, Rex groaned, as if he had lost his voice, and removed his hands from Kagami's shoulders.

Although Kagami had considered trying to make David go back from the beginning, after witnessing David's thorough and excellent preparations, he concluded that having him return to being an observer was dangerous. Rather than not knowing if he would be seen through, it was better for him to watch David. That was his logic.

"Now, now...Kagami-chan. Exactly what kind of magic did you use? I've tried asking around for rumors about that puzzling line that was formed in the plaza. This isn't a recruitment produced by Kagami-chan's group."

After Kagami had talked with Rex about what to do with David, Takako, who had been standing there for who knows how long, said that as she folded her arms. Rex and Kagami were frightened by this large woman's sudden appearance.

"Amazing...for so many people to gather here! Rex-san's and Kagami-san's advertising was really good! How did they get recruited like this?"

Krul said as she appeared from behind Takako, her eyes beaming as she saw the line forming in the plaza.

"Wait, Takako-chan, what about Menou?"

"He's taking care of the shop for me. I would be worried if it was just the Kenta-Uros-chans."

Kagami muttered, "I see" to Takako. At the same time, even if Menou himself wasn't here, he was slightly happy to have the Demon become more familiar with the town and be relied upon to watch over the shop.

"Hey...is Tina the only receptionist? Jeez...that's not cute. Look, she has teary eyes and her expression is turning slightly bitter, right?...I'll go help her out."

After that was said, Takako also yelled out to her, "Oooi Tina-chan, I'll also help you~" and rushed off towards the kiosk. Just before this happened, David, who had looked in Takako's direction when she shouted, met Krul's gaze.

Unexpectedly, rather than having Krul, who had appeared suddenly, yelling out David's name, David seemed surprised upon recognizing her, quickly separated from Kagami's group, approached her at an unbelievable speed, and:

"Fuaaaaah! Krul-sama! You're in high spirits! You're as beautiful as a single flower blooming in the desolate wilderness as always...I want to lick you all over!"

This was said cheerfully.

"Hm? Hmmmm? Mm...What did you say just now~?"

Feeling grossed out by David's sudden remark and change in attitude from a gentleman, Kagami asked him to repeat the question, as if he had misheard David.

David then turned serious and looked at Kagami again.

"I said that I want to lick her with a 'peropero'. You don't want to lick her, even though she's this pretty and cute? I think you should know this much as a man."

"Although I don't really know what you're saying, for now, go apologize to Alice, who saved you from being treated like a pervert last time. Apologize to me, too?"

When she heard this, Krul let out a sigh, as if fed up. David hadn't changed in the slightest. He had been this way since a long time ago. Although his first impression was that of an excellent servant and a gentleman, Kagami and those around Alice gave in all at once.

"David-dono has been like this since a long time ago...His love for women is too strong. It's enough to make other feels grossed out...That's why I hated working together with him before he became an observer."

"Then, why did he have no reaction to Alice and Tina, huh?"

"He doesn't seem to have any interest in little girls."

"Although I thought he was slightly gentleman-ish, he's one of those perverted gentlemen, huh? I suddenly want to reject him. Who is this

scary guy?”

After Kagami whispered his reply into Rex’s ear, in order to protect Alice from any bad influences, he brought Alice closer to him. Just for a bit, Alice also showed an expression of caution towards the sudden perverted remarks.

At the same time, Kagami began to shiver due to the fact that the guys around him were all extremely dense. He wanted to live a mediocre life in peace. This was what Kagami wished for from the bottom of his heart.

Part 8

“David...Why are you here?”

Like always, Krul muttered that with a yareyare and an expression that seemed as if she wanted to say something. However, seeing David say, “That’s my line, you know,” she closed her mouth, feeling slightly disappointed.

“I’ve received a report that Krul-sama has given up on the Demon King subjugation and is now staying in this town, so after being ordered to confirm this by the King, I’ve come here. Although, Rex-sama and Kagami-sama had already guessed this much. Along with resuming your training to defeat the Demon King, you’ll gather funds for it as well.”

After receiving David’s explanation, Krul shifted her gaze to Kagami. Kagami then sent her a wordless signal, as if saying, ‘Such a thing has been done already.’

“That’s right. The method Kagami-san used to reach Level 999...I’ve decided to stay here, since we are capable of growing stronger if we spend time at his side. My goal hasn’t changed. Please inform Father.”

Krul, who had read the intent behind Kagami’s signal, replied to David.

“I’ve received the responsibility to confirm whether or not that is the truth. Although I’m extremely grateful, allow me to observe you, at least for the next month.”

“It’s...you?”

Krul seemed dejected by those words.

“I’ll come to wake you up every morning.”

“Please don’t.”

“Hohoho, haven’t you been woken up by me every morning since long ago?”

“That was during my childhood. There is no reason for you to sneak into the bedroom of a woman who is turning 18 this year!”

“There isn’t any relation between the present and the past. I’ve always been Krul-sama’s servant, regardless of that.”

As the two pretended to argue with each other, they revealed intimate, kind smiles. Even if he was watching from the side, Kagami appeared to doubt this scene, which seemed to show that these two were close with each other since the past.

“What’s wrong, Shishou? You look doubtful.”

“Hm? Aiya, the bond between those two is pretty good.”

“It’s because David-dono has always been Krul’s servant since she was born. Although they’ve been separated for more than a year, I think they give off the feeling of relatives.”

Kagami’s doubtful look worsened after hearing Rex’s words.

“So what are you worried about, Shishou?”

Rex asked Kagami for an explanation after seeing him wordlessly put his hand on his chin in a worried manner, so Kagami brought Rex to an area slightly separated from the plaza.

“I don’t understand what David is trying to do.”

Rex seemed confused by those words.

“I don’t think that’s the case though? Didn’t he come to confirm if the report was accurate?”

“Well, think about it, isn’t it strange for him to observe us, just because we’ve stayed in this town from the beginning? Moreover, he’s going to observe us for one month? Even though he will confirm the truth that ‘We’re staying in this town in order to collect gold and train to defeat the Demon King,’ is there really a need to confirm this? We haven’t had an Observer like him following us on our journey until now, have we?”

Rex finally appeared doubtful and said, “I see,” after he received this explanation. Even if he did come to do that, he didn’t realize that David could have an ulterior motive.

Speaking of being an Observer, there were two possible motives: one was

to confirm whether or not the actions of the group were proper, and the other was to find something he was searching for. As for their goal of 'Saving up gold while raising their Levels and staying in the town,' even if they weren't observed by him, he would know if they had worked properly if he confirmed with them once a week.

There weren't any reasons for David to be sent in for Krul, so he was confused. Why was it David? For what reason was David, who had always done his job as a servant, chosen as an Observer. If he had planned to observe them for real, he should have come as an observer without any personal feelings.

Yet, why would a person who harbored personal feelings be sent here? This was why Kagami was puzzled.

"Is it just because he was at Krul's side?"

"That might be so...No, there is no way, I don't think it's that. For now, I feel that something is suspicious. We should be careful, especially when he's in front of Alice and Menou."

As he thought of 'What his goal could be,' Kagami mentioned those two's names seriously, since they would probably be targeted soon. Rex immediately understood what he meant and nodded in a serious manner, and then the two of them returned to the plaza.

//

Meanwhile, in a land called 'Tokyo', a giant protective wall had been built around it in a circle that reached the seashore. Within this perimeter was the view of an incessantly expanding town. That didn't mean that it was covered in buildings though. While a set amount of land was separated, as if it was independent, the buildings were expanding towards the giant castle located in the center, as if converging around it.

It was a very large Castle Town, one without the presence of Monsters or Demons. A fort-like castle existed at its center. The castle walls towered over it and were big enough to seem impenetrable from the front. The castle itself had been built high enough to make one believe it reached the Heavens. If one was thinking of trying to assassinate the King residing in

this castle, they would need to fight the many warriors inside, all of whom held capable roles and high Levels, then climb up the never-ending staircase that progressed in a spiral, and finally arrive before the King, who resided on the topmost floor.

“I can’t believe Krul would...that’s an unbelievable story.”

A man, who appeared to be in his late 40’s with a dignified face and kind-hearted eyes that, when looked at, gave off a sense of peace, was sitting upon the throne placed in the innermost area of this chamber and said that.

Perhaps it was due to the expensive adornments placed upon the armor he wore and the clothes and mantle he was wearing, but there was an overbearing sense of dignity coming from this man.

“However...it’s the truth. As for the conclusion you’re aiming for, surely it will end up differing greatly in reality. We have to reach a decision quickly, so that this won’t happen.”

A woman with long, wavy, violet hair, currently on her knees before the throne, said that while facing the ground.

“Don’t be so hasty. We will confirm if this is the truth from now on.”

“There is no need to go so far to confirm it. I’ve seen it with my own eyes.”

“...I don’t know of the things you’ve done together as a party with Krul and Rex.

Therefore, it’s impossible for me to believe the words you’ve spoken. However, you know too much about various things.”

“It’s an issue of time. Even if you don’t believe me for now...the truth of the situation won’t really change.”

“You said your name was...Palna? Exactly what kind of human is this Villager, to be able to act against Rex and Krul’s wills and brainwash them, who hated Demons, to that extent? And why were you not lured by his existence while the two of them were? Did you think that you would be

conferred wealth and rank if you were to report these things to me?”

Palna, who had kept facing downwards, put on a sarcastic look as if she wanted to say, ‘Such an idiot’, when she received those words, and then shook her head left and right to negate them.

“I don’t have any need for wealth nor rank. I was always baffled by that Villager from the beginning. As to what kind of human he is, please ask Krul-chan and Rex.”

“If that’s the case, then what do you wish for?”

“A world without the Demons. That is the reward that I seek.”

After she said this, the King looked at her dubiously, and Palna looked back at him with an ugly, distorted expression. A world without Demons was the ideal for any human; however, it was nothing more than a desire.

The King sensed the hatred within her expression, which had a tenacity suitable for carrying out a mission, and let out a sigh as he considered if she would end up as a harmful existence to him.

However, even though he didn’t have that Palna-like hatred or tenacity, the King had a sense of duty to match it. Eliminating the Demons would grant humanity peace and order. In order to realize this great achievement that no one had accomplished to this date, he had selected a number of means to accomplish it. He had even sent his daughter and a number of people to assassinate the Demon King.

“If the things you’re talking about becomes a reality...”

There was a need to attack as soon as possible. It was impossible for the war potential he had personally reared to be snatched away right before his very eyes. If it was stolen, it would be fine to return the favor. If anyone felt any uncertainty, then it would be fine for them to return to his side. If they were humans, who were different from Demons, then there would be many means of dealing with it for Simon Hexal Doria, the ruler of Hexal Doria Kingdom, who had the role of the King.

“Besides that, I’m the King, you know...And as for this, I’ve already been relieved by the information sent to me by one of the persons I’ve sent to

investigate.”

After he said this, Palna stood up, turned around, and left the King’s chamber.

When Palna closed the door to the King’s chamber that had an exit and an entrance, the ugly expression she had shown since earlier changed to a meek one, and she let out a sad sigh.

It was as if she had performed an act, ‘Just Like Herself’, within the King’s chambers, even though she was careful not to change her resolution. She grasped her trembling hands tightly.

“...Demons are an existence that should be eliminated.”

After she said that, Palna began to descend the castle’s spiral staircase slowly, one step at a time.

Chapter 6: What's Truly Important Isn't Money

Part 1

“Krul! I'll leave support to you!”

“Yes!”

The group was at the Ancient Cave, located a short distance from Balman, where the Legendary Holy Sword had formerly resided. Krul bestowed magic that strengthened one's physical abilities onto Rex, who had yelled that out with a tense expression. At that moment, Rex's entire body shone with a faint bluish light.

“Take this! Eat my fist! This attack will surpass that of a Martial Artist!”

After confirming that his physical abilities had indeed risen, Rex, who had yelled that in a loud voice at the Blue Devils on standby before him, flew at the Blue Devils with lightning speed.

“Ok, redo it.”

However, from the side, Kagami chopped Rex's back, who had tried to fly at them, and then Rex was forced to grovel on the ground.

The Blue Devils, frightened by the inexplicable situation of a Human trying to attack them and then being embedded into the ground by another mediocre Human who had appeared from the side, backed away.

“W-What are you...doing, Shishou.”

Rex said with a bitter look, and glared at Kagami while he pulled himself up slowly.

Krul was flustered, not knowing what went wrong.

“Think carefully about the meaning of having you fight with your bare hands. There isn't any meaning to it if you use magic to strengthen your physical abilities, right? You won't receive any experience if you don't

fight in a disadvantageous situation.”

“Well...but Shishou, the Levels of the Blue Devil’s Level are 93. Even if I don’t fight at a disadvantage, I’ll still gain experience since my Level is 91, you know?”

“Regarding the experience value, rather than minding the Level gap, you will gain experience by fighting those who are at a higher rank than you. It’s better for you to get used to fighting while at a disadvantage for now. I’ll be able to save you if it becomes dangerous since I’m watching over you, so be at ease and fight. You want to become stronger quickly, right?”

After this was said, Rex reluctantly signaled Krul to undo the effects of her Phys Up Magic.

When this was done, Rex, who had always worn elegant clothes, changed into a shabby-looking traveller’s outfit and charged towards the Blue Devils.

At that moment, even though three Blue Devils thrust their spears at Rex, just as they were about to connect with his cheek, Rex dodged them and dealt a blow to the Blue Devils’ bodies.

“Did I do it!?”

Rex, who had dealt a beautiful blow to the Blue Devils, looked at the one that was sent flying, and at that moment, the ground beneath the Blue Devils burst into flames due to a casted Magic.

“Uwaachaaaa! Hot! Hot!”

Seeing Rex, who had always been a pompous character, get ruined and suffer like that, Krul hurriedly created a Water Ball with Magic and threw it at Rex’s face. It immediately healed him with Healing Magic.

“It doesn’t mean you need to defeat a higher ranked opponent in one move you know...you should defeat them by repeated hit and run tactics while enduring and not letting your guard down.

Kagami muttered that while sipping on some tea he had received from Alice, and watched Rex’s hair sizzle and burn.

Presently, Kagami's group had visited the Ancient Cave once again to complete a monster subjugation request for the Ancient Cave issued by the Guild in Balman. Kagami had received the Quest, which was to subdue 12 Blue Devils altogether, that very morning, and by nightfall, Kagami had already completed the Blue Devil Subjugation Quest, since he had defeated the Monsters one by one.

He left the subjugation of the Blue Devils, which could provide experience depending on the Level gap due to their higher Levels, to Rex and Krul, who wanted to become stronger. So, in order to temper their bodies, he had been giving the two of them guidance.

For this reason, it had to be done formally, since it was rather convenient for Rex and Krul, even though they had doubts because they were being accompanied by David under the pretext of being an observer for the Quest Completions this time around.

"Umm...Is it fine for me to just cast Healing Magic like this?"

Although it was suspicious, since Krul had been casting her Healing Magic incessantly, Rex had been receiving an effect similar to the Automatic Recovery Kagami had. Besides that, regarding the gained experience dependent on Level Gap, Rex and Krul had decided to share it.

However, depending on the high ranked Monster battled, Rex could obtain the experience without sharing with Krul.

Healing Magic was only connected to life by preventing a potentially disadvantageous situation, but it still helped and was added onto the experience value. Performing Healing Magic was connected to one's life as they were injured and beaten to a pulp. When Kagami was still at a low Level, he had requested a town's Monk to help raise his Level like that.

"Well, even though you can only obtain experience depending on the Level Gap, Krul still looks like she's making a little progress with it, so it's fine if you get stronger like this, one step at a time."

"But...this hasn't changed since the times when I had the Kingdom's Warriors help me get stronger!"

“Well, that may be so.”

Kagami, who seemed to have realized that somehow, replied to her after scratching his head. After sipping his tea once, while worrying about how to put that into words, David took a step forward when he saw that.

“Krul-sama. Kagami-sama is probably worried about you.”

“About...me?”

“Krul-sama is different from Rex-sama, as a girl and a Sage, which is not a Role suited to be a vanguard, she is weak to attacks, just like Monks and Magicians. As long as you listen to Kagami-sama...Battles against Higher Ranks will always be accompanied by danger, and even if you do get stronger, you will surely be visited by suffering that you can't evade.”

“But compared to me, hasn't Kagami-san come this far with the Role of a weak Villager?”

As to whether she understood him, she said that with a frown, and a confused Kagami muttered, “Well, you are a girl...you're not saying that you want to be forced to experience something painful or scary...right?”

As if she had heard these subtle words, Krul's cheeks blushed slightly, feeling happy about Kagami worrying about her.

“S-...Shishou, aren't you doing nothing more than giving her different treatment from me just because she's a girl?”

“You're a boy.”

After having exchanged blows with the Blue Devils located here and there, a tottering Rex said that as he struck Kagami's shoulder with a ‘pon’, and Kagami replied to him with a beaming smile as if saying, ‘Good luck.’

To be honest, regardless of her gender, to make Krul force herself too much was a pain that Kagami felt she couldn't endure.

Although Rex's motives were slightly impure, he had the resolution, conviction, and will to try and endure it. Him currently standing off against the Blue Devils without the slightest hesitation was solid evidence.

Kagami was unconcerned, since he had 'bought' Rex in order to temper him.

As for Krul, she probably shouldn't be the core.

In the first place, if her Level was still 45 as a Sage, he felt that using this method to raise her Level and become stronger was better and more enjoyable than fighting impossible battles.

"When I started on this journey, I was still Level 42. I've only raised it... three Levels! It's only three, you know?"

"Well, that's about right, since you went a while without fighting a lot. Moreover, only two months have passed since the start of the journey, right? I understand your feelings of impatience, so calm down. Even though it's Rex's turn today, I've properly considered a method to make you stronger."

"...It's a promise, ok?"

"Aah, I promise."

"Then I'll be under your care until I reach Level 200, okay?"

"Eh? Ah...Y-Yes. It's a promise."

Kagami averted his eyes with all of his might after saying that. Krul, noticing his suspicious behavior, looked at him as if doubting him and spat out, "Why are you averting your eyes?" However, Kagami didn't try to look at her.

During this exchange, she had stopped her hands, which were healing Rex. Seeing Rex gradually becoming more ragged, Alice hurriedly carried over a potion to his mouth. Finally noticing it, along with a hurried Alice, Krul caught a hold of the bloody Rex and yelled out, "I-I'm sorry!" and directed some Healing Magic towards him.

"Hoho, although your skill in guiding them is splendid, it seems you don't have the knowledge to guide a girl's heart."

"'Shut up,' is what I would say, but is it necessary for an Observer to be here? The preparations for the Casino Opening depend on you, right? Isn't

it the day after tomorrow?”

“I know what I’m doing. Everything has been completed. Since I have free time today, it’s fine to accompany you. Of course, it’s a necessary duty as an Observer.”

After David gave him a pleasant, elegant smile, Kagami let out a sigh, saying, “I’m not a guy that can be eaten.”

The Casino Opening had been postponed to the day after tomorrow. David’s arrival meant that the preparations had been progressing fairly. Rather, he had completed the preparations using his excellent skills in a way that made it seem like things would have been hopeless if he hadn’t been there.

The preparations included the goods available for use in the Casino, an operational check of the equipment, and an understanding of the Rules and the Staff rules. He had done everything, from agreeing on the premium goods and their rates to working on the Staff agenda, their working hours, and such.

Once this was done, it was fine to leave the management of the bar and taverns and the like to Takako, and to leave the things related to the Church to Tina. The things Kagami originally had to do had been shouldered by David.

“To be honest, I should be thankful to you. Even though I thought you were a dangerous person from the start because you said you were an Observer, I think it would have been dangerous if you weren’t here.”

“Hoho, it wasn’t with just my power alone. Takako-sama, was it? That gentleman is quite skillful, he helped me out by carrying miscellaneous items himself, and was suitable for the work that couldn’t be entrusted to any of the Staff. That gentleman is worthy of being a man amongst men.”

“Eh? Takako-chan’s a woman, you know?”

“Eh?”

“Hm? Well, Takako-chan is a woman after all, you know? She wore a pink dougi, right?”

“I’m sorry for troubling you. She is not someone that should be called a woman.”

“Without a doubt, Takako-chan would have killed you if she was here, come back to reality, man.”

Part 2

Perhaps it was because his reality had received a sizable shock from Kagami, but David was at a loss for words after hearing this and had a surprised expression, while sweat formed on his forehead. Kagami was slightly bewildered by the dramatic change in his expression.

“Why...are you this surprised?”

Although there had been countless cases where people were surprised to find out that Takako was a woman before now, David had a fearful expression, rather than being surprised.

“Although this was while I was managing work with Takako-sama...she would place her arms around my shoulders, around my waist, strike my buttocks, and to encourage me, she would always say...‘You’re a good man, I’ve always waiting...for a firm person like you to come to me. You have a very strong heart.’”

“Aah, that’s her mating call.”

“I beg your pardon. What you’re saying...is a joke...right?”

After listening to David’s question, Kagami turned away in an honest manner. David made an expression that looked like he was drained of all his energy. Before he could say ‘Please do something about it’, Kagami moved towards Alice, who was cheering on Rex, who was fighting hurriedly.

“What’s wrong, Kagami-san? You have a sorrowful look on you...”

“Well, even though it’s shocking that I’m an unmarried man without the thoughts of finding a wife quickly, I’m shivering at seeing David being targeted.”

Kagami, who saw that David was still in an absentminded state, thought about it from the bottom of his heart. He didn’t want to become like David. To be honest, he felt that if he were locked-on to by Takako-chan, he wouldn’t be able to run away from her.

He could only feel that she would chase him to the end of the earth.

Although it was only for a moment, Kagami seriously thought that he should quickly calm down before he was targeted in such a way.

“It’ll be fine, I’m here with Kagami-san after all.”

Alice placed her hand on her chest with a ‘Don’, as though it was natural for her to say that, and gave him a smile. Kagami muttered, without thinking, ‘If I’m not married 10 years later,’ while giving a small smile to Alice, who had showed him a decisive attitude.

Although she momentarily showed him an unsatisfied look at these words, she looked at him shyly after thinking about it in a positive light, since she couldn’t hate and refuse him.

Suddenly, Krul began to panic, as though she had heard him. Nearby, Rex was beginning to accumulate damage again.

“Krul-san. Rex will end up dying at this rate, is that fine?”

“A-Awawa...I-I’m sorry!”

She blushed and immediately cast healing magic on Rex. However, as soon as her healing magic ended, Krul approached Kagami and said “What is the meaning of this!?”

“Well, I’m saying that IF there’s nobody with me after 10 years. I understand how you feel, the absentminded David is also here right now, and just because she’s Alice, for you to say a lot of negative things is...”

“Kagami-san is 23 years old right now, right? In 10 years...won’t you be a 30 year old uncle!? Alice-chan is still 14 years old, you know! Besides, if she remains unmarried, having her marry such a self-centered person with that age difference will make Alice pitiable! I won’t forgive it!”

“Ah, what about you?”

It was obvious that Alice was a Demon, so Kagami, who thought that she was saying that because she couldn’t forgive a Demon marrying a human, became slightly disappointed.

When Alice, who appeared to not understand Krul’s words, said, “I don’t mind it at all,” Krul began saying things like “It’s useless! There is an old

saying, 'Life is short, so fall in love with girls...' and 'Don't waste your youth, so decide quickly', trying to steal a march on her. However, Krul began to understand the subtle, honest feeling she had caught a glimpse of from Alice, and after considering her position, decided that she had to win against Alice fair and square.

//

"I-I've...finally defeated them. The things that happened here were well beyond my expectations...amazing, Shishou. My heart nearly gave out countless times, you know?"

"Well, all of the times when your heart nearly gave out was generally because of Krul though?"

At long last, the figures of the Blue Devils had changed into gold, and it had not been several minutes after he let out a war cry of victory. Whether or not his heart had truly suffered, Rex's pupils were slightly hollow, and Krul, who saw this, showed an apologetic expression.

"By the way, what's wrong with David-dono? He hasn't moved at all since earlier."

"David-san is trying to confront a new trial that faces him. Don't get in his way."

Although Rex directed a puzzled gaze towards David when he heard this, after learning the fact that he was being targeted by Takako-chan, Rex's expression immediately changed to one of pity.

"So, how is it? How much exp did you get?"

After Kagami asked, Rex immediately displayed his own Status Window. The amount of exp displayed in the Status Window had increased.

Rex had previously confirmed that his exp value was at 10% before he fought with the Blue Devils, and the previous battle had increased it to 20%. After seeing this, Rex's eyes opened widely and he was at a loss for words.

Since exp gain was dependent on the Level Gap, as well as one's own

level gap with their opponent, if someone with Rex's Level gap was thinking about raising their Level, they would need to defeat 30 Blue Devils to fill it up. Yet, despite having a separate exp value from Krul, he had obtained enough exp to increase his gauge to 20% just by defeating one of them, so he couldn't help being surprised.

"So much...exp?"

"Oh, you've obtained quite a bit. You can't obtain it if you don't suffer enough for it to be enormous every time though."

"But, it's fast. I see...this is the reason that Shishou reached his Level at such a young age."

"I also have a skill that heals me automatically. It's fine because Krul is with us right now, but you must not fight strong enemies if you are unable to bring Krul along with you, or else you won't be able to power through it at this speed, you know? You'll also lose everything if you die."

After this was said, Rex showed him a slightly worried look. Healing that was dependent on medicine like potions were unreliable when fighting with a risk of death, since there was a limit to the number of times it would display an effect. If he wanted to try confronting opponents that were too strong, just like Kagami, it would be difficult without a means of constantly healing himself by a fixed amount.

If he wanted to raise his own Level, it would be necessary to get stronger by fighting opponents. If that happened, he should not fight things strong enough to kill his party. If possible, he would learn a way to heal himself.

"At which stage...did Shishou obtain his automatic healing Skill?"

"I remember that it was the first one, Level 100."

"100, huh...it would be great if I, too, could learn a healing Skill."

"It seems that it's impossible. Although that Demon uncle who called himself Estellar said it himself, it's a super rare case, and it also seems that only Villagers can learn strange Skills."

After Kagami said this, Rex was at a loss and let out a sigh. However, he

made a serious expression, as if he had remembered something, and looked towards Kagami. Then:

“Shishou’s Skills are his Automatic Heal and the one that makes you go past your limits, which you let us see...What other kinds do you have? You still have seven other Skills, right?”

He asked Kagami the question he had suddenly thought of.

Part 3

“Well I didn’t plan to hide it this long...at least, I shouldn’t reveal it normally, right? I shouldn’t show my cards.”

“I realize that, but it’s been on my mind.”

After Rex said that, Alice and Krul nodded in agreement, supporting him. Seeing this, Kagami let out a sigh and said, “Do you really want to know about it...?”, before opening his Status Window. Then, a list of his Skills was displayed.

“Super...Finger...? Hyper Finger...Hey, Kagami-san.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Aren’t there a lot of Finger Skills?”

Alice, who had seen the names of the Skills displayed on his Status Window, muttered that innocently. The first skill, which was displayed at the top of the list, she recognized from before was 『Auto Revive』, and the next one, which he had learned at Level 200, was a Skill called 『Super Finger』.

After that 『Hyper Finger』, 『Ultra Finger』, 『Miracle Finger』, 『Perfect Finger』, 『Exotic Full Burst Act 5』, 『Reverse』, 『Limiter Release』, and 『The One Who Challenges God』 were lined up on the display.

“Although you already told us about Auto Revive, Limiter Release, and The One Who Challenges God...This group of Finger Skills, and Exotic Full Burst...? What are these, they sound amazing?”

“Don’t rush. I wanted to show them to you one at a time. Although it was mentioned before, you’re expecting amazing effects like with the other three Skills, right? These Skills are the shitty ones.”

Although Alice, Rex, and Krul gave Kagami, who had emphasized his words, bewildered looks, the description of Super Finger was immediately displayed on the Status Window, and they looked at it. This is what was written on the Status Window.

『Super Finger』

Effect: Strengthens finger's striking power.

After reading the effect, Alice, Rex, and Krul displayed difficult expressions.

"This is...a Skill that was called out by that Demon Estellar? How much power does it add to your finger strike?"

Krul asked him timidly.

"One finger gives the same amount of power as a strike that uses two fingers."

In response to this, Rex muttered, 'So subtle...', and showed a look of pity.

Continuing, Kagami displayed the names of the Finger Skills in order and showed their effects to the three of them.

『Hyper Finger』

Effect: Additionally strengthens finger's striking power.

『Ultra Finger』

Effect: Additionally strengthens finger's striking power.

『Miracle Finger』

Effect: When using a finger to strike, it will be immune to injuries.

『Perfect Finger』

Effect: Regardless of the situation, striking aim will be precise.

"Do you guys understand? The feelings I had back then, when I continued to acquire these Skills that couldn't be used until Level 600? Although I finally became able to defeat a slime with a booger, the way they attack you is normally strong, right?"

A Villager was an unfortunate existence in the first place, so Rex and Krul, who could easily imagine the despair from having Skills like these, showed him a bitter look.

At the same time, they felt like they kind of understood why Kagami

could obtain a unique Skill that surpassed his limits. Truly, if he had not received Automatic Heal from the start, perhaps Kagami wouldn't exist today.

“B-But! What about Level...700? Haven't you learned other Skills besides the Finger ones? Surely you were rewarded for your efforts and for not giving up! Those Skill names seem kind of amazing.”

Seeing from their expressions that the two were unable to take it any longer, Alice followed up with a smile, thinking that she had to do something about it. However, Kagami didn't use words to reply, changing his Status Window and displayed the details for 『Exotic Full Burst Act 5』 instead.

『Exotic Full Burst Act 5』

Effect: A cool name.

“I felt utter despair when I learned this Skill. That was when I thought about beating the crap out of the gods.”

Alice couldn't answer Kagami, who said that with a serious look, at all. At the moment, it was painful enough to learn about his true feelings at the time, like his despair, his suffering, and his sadness.

Then, just like that, Kagami displayed his final Skill.

Rex, Krul and Alice, who had abandoned any possibilities of seeing amazing Skills, were filled with the desire to praise and hug Kagami, who had done his best until the shitty skill he got at Level 700, and then they looked at the new Skill.

『Reverse』

Effect: As long as your Level is lower than your opponent, you can use powerful skills and magic without a cost. However, if your level is higher than your opponent, the powerful skills and magic you can use decrease.

“This Skill...could it be, it's this Skill that wouldn't let Kagami-san use magic and only allowed you to use simple skills?”

Although they hadn't expected anything when looking at it, Krul saw

this skill and asked him that timidly, while wearing a surprised expression. Kagami then looked at her seriously once again, with a tired atmosphere around him, and said:

“This Skill...I learned it when I reached Level 800.”

With these words, she instantly understood what he meant.

Krul and Rex hadn't thought that there would be a Skill that would actually make you weaker.

Although they didn't know how many interpretations there were, since Kagami had only used simple skills like Charge Blow until now, this Skill could only make him seem more pitiful, since he was completely unable to fully utilize any skills, despite reaching the highest level.

From this, he couldn't help but bear a grudge against the gods, and they had to agree with him on that.

Part 4

“B-But...I think it’s amazing that you defeated a Slime by flinging a booger at it with your finger. It seems like you can use something else too...There isn’t a need to have such hatred.”

When Rex followed up with this, Kagami scratched his head and let out a sigh.

“Certainly, it doesn’t mean I can’t use it, but I’m talking about comparing it to normal Skills. Should I be satisfied with what I got, with just my fingers getting stronger?”

“Isn’t it just fine that you can use them? I have yet to learn a single one, you know.”

“Well, it’s good that you have a dream. I can’t learn any more of them, right? It would be good if the Skills Rex learns can be used for our plans. Also, if they’re Skills that are hopeless for our plans...Well, I’ll treat you to your favorite meal.”

Rex and Krul simultaneously imagined 『Exotic Full Burst Act 5』in their minds and showed him a look of pity. Only Alice felt something when she heard the word ‘Plan’, and although she tried to ask him by tugging on the hem of Kagami’s clothes–

“You’re here! Kagami-chan! Geez...It took a while to find you, since this dungeon is so wide, you know?”

Suddenly, a giant called Takako, who could be mistaken as a Monster, hurriedly appeared from the far end of the dungeon. After reconsidering the words that had not come out of her throat yet, thinking ‘Well, it’s not like it’s enough to ask about it’, Alice rushed towards Takako.

“You surprised me, what I thought was a new Monster turned out to be Takako-chan.”

“Geez, Kagami-chan...I’ll punish you, you know?”

“I’m sorry.”

Takako, who always had a happy smile on her face, instantly made a

gaze as sharp as a thorn, causing Kagami to reflexively sit down in a dogeza.

“So, what’s wrong, Takako-chan? Taking the trouble to come here, is there an emergency?”

After Alice gave an amused smile at seeing him sitting in a dogeza, she turned towards Takako and asked that question.

In answer, Takako made a troubled expression while saying ‘There’s a bit of trouble’, and began to look around, as if she was frantically searching for someone. Then, her gaze stopped on David, who stiffened, and she rushed towards him while showing a face that was beaming with smiles and wriggling her body.

As a Kagami, who was sitting in a dogeza, came into view, David muttered, ‘This is already hopeless, so I don’t know.’

“Please listen to me, David-san, I have a problem...David-san?”

“...Hohehi!? T-Takako-sama, is it? What’s wrong? To be here in such a place.”

“It’s a bit of a problem. Although we brought in the alcohol that we planned to serve at the Casino Bar and Taverns...I’ve forgotten to order the alcohol that was to be used as service drinks for the guests who come to our casino, as well as the drinks we were going to use as casino commodities...The amount we have at my bar aren’t enough.”

Although Takako, who had appeared suddenly, had a worried expression, David switched to a serious expression after listening to her, and with a ‘Fumu...’, he thought about it. When he saw this, Kagami concluded that he should also participate and rushed towards the two of them.

“Isn’t it fine to buy them from the merchants?”

“Using service drinks is slightly expensive, but we are capable of using a substitute. However, since we planned to use slightly high-grade alcohol as a commodity item to serve people, even if we buy it from merchants, we won’t have enough. We also need to figure out the brand names.”

Kagami lightly grabbed his head and showed a troubled look. There were wine cellars even in Balman, and although they could brew alcohol, it would be a lower quality when compared to the goods they had originally planned to have, and there wouldn't be enough to make the commodities they were planning to use to serve people in the casino.

It was because the guests they would have at the casino would mostly be nobles. Since there was a possibility of having select nobles suspect the Casino's dignity if they were served cheap commodities, they had gone with David's plan of preparing the highest class items.

"It's my oversight...I'm sorry, Kagami-chan."

"It's fine already, Takako-chan has done a lot for us. If we were to wait to bring the next shipment in, it would be one week later...even if I went to pick it up myself, I would need three days to do it. Let's give up and make do with the commodities we have at the moment. It will be fine to obtain it later, even if it doesn't make it in time for the opening."

"Please wait a moment, we might still be able to do it somehow."

At this time, David, who had been absorbed in his thoughts, muttered that.

"It might be possible...We would take the highway, pass through the nearby forest, and take a carriage towards Salumeria, which has a wine cellar managed by the Kingdom. If we offered to negotiate with them, perhaps...we should be able to request them to sell it to us without needing to go too far."

Kagami shuddered a bit when he heard this. Since the Kingdom was a land where a lot of nobles gathered, there was fierce competition, as there was a lot of alcohol with improved qualities from high-class cellars. It didn't mean that all of their alcohol was sellable though, and there were often stories about them leaving to sell it to various parts of the world on expeditions.

However, it was too strange for one to know about the routes they took, as well as their agenda for these alcohol sales.

Normally, this information couldn't be acquired unless one was a local who often dealt with stores that managed this alcohol. Yet David, who didn't seem to have any particular relations to it, knew about this.

"Why do you know about such things?"

"Well, no matter what kind of information it is, I've looked it up beforehand. I still don't know if we can actually properly pass through it though."

After David said this, he let out a light laugh, 'Hohoho', as if deceiving Kagami.

Although there had been many instances like this already, due to him helping out with the Casino, David had decided to look up information he didn't know that could be useful later on.

Even if David had looked it up beforehand, Kagami didn't know the process of obtaining this information, which was enough to wonder why on earth he would do so. However, when compared to themselves, David had an information network that they didn't have.

This was what Kagami thought. In other words, it meant that the reason David was borrowing power from somewhere to observe Kagami, as well as what kind of information he was spreading to whom, was because he was placed in a situation that he could not control.

"Nevertheless, as expected, it's probably...a wait-and-see."

However, even if that was the case, David was useful. Since David was on Krul's side, he was unable to bluntly refuse. He didn't know what David was thinking about, but he couldn't complain about a situation where he wasn't being grabbed by the tail, so Kagami decided, in his heart, that he would be saddled with a superior staff, since there hadn't been any disadvantageous events that could lead to their tails being caught.

At this time, after Kagami looked at Takako and wondered as to whether David was capable of doing a lot of work, he turned towards David, who was in a dreadful trance, and said 'Then, I'll leave the rest to you', deciding that the two of them were enough to do it.

//

The next day. In the morning, after waiting for the carriage to carry the alcohol via the highway route suggested by David's information, it had begun transporting alcohol from cellars famous even in the Kingdom, and they were successful in purchasing everything, due to David's negotiation.

Kagami's group had solved their problems for the moment, and became very busy with the preparations for the Casino opening, which had been deferred to the next day. Today, without taking on a single quest, each and every one of them had been preparing inside the newly built casino.

"Hmm...As I thought, this was meant for Alice-chan. Yeah, it's this."

"You understand it, don't you, Kagami-chan! You're doing excellent!"

"To have such an idea with this...Kagami-san, are you a genius!?"

Meanwhile, Kagami, Takako, and Krul had decided to spend their time inside the Casino by dressing up Alice, who was helping out as the Casino's Mascot.

Currently, Alice was wearing a cute, fluttering dress that was hand-picked by Krul, a hair ornament chosen by Takako, and a stuffed animal which Kagami had forced her to hold. She had been played around with as if she was a dress-up doll.

By the way, Krul and Takako had been coordinating the outfit seriously, but Kagami was half amused by it.

Part 5

“Umm...Everyone, it’s really hard to move in these clothes, but they’re cute.”

Alice wore a strained smile from start to finish. Although it had been enjoyable, since she was at an age where she wanted to be fashionable, Alice had been intimidated by Takako’s and Krul’s slightly powerful enthusiasm.

“It’s futile! It’s important to limit one’s freedom of movement in order to charm people, you know! Trust me, I’m a Martial Artist! Alice-chan’s foundation is fine, so you have to show off your good qualities to your surroundings more!”

Although Martial Artists had a Persuasion Power when they spoke, Kagami thought, with a serious expression, that Takako’s persuasive power would vanish like smoke.

“That’s right! Your long-awaited big moment...even if you deceive your friends later on, the first impression is the most important! Trust me, I’m the Princess!”

Krul supported Takako, her eyes sparkling as she held onto the clothes she wanted Alice to try with one hand. Kagami perceived the Persuasion Power that he could not match, so he tried to leave the Casino’s break room and go check on the state of the Staff members who were preparing the facilities for tomorrow.

“Ah, please wait a moment Kagami-san! M-Me too! I’ll go with you!”

Although Alice, who was being jostled by Takako and Krul, yelled something out from behind him as he was trying to depart from the break area, he decided to ignore it and closed the door.

“I’m sorry Alice, be a good girl and stay here for me.”

Kagami muttered that and then let out a sigh of relief. Although David had been treated like a silent shadow, he had in fact been standing at the edge of the break area, as if he was watching over them warmly.

They had gotten used to it recently, but it felt bad to be observed by him. It was unusual for David to devote himself to helping out and observe Kagami, but he didn't try to leave Krul's side, since he was fundamentally there to observe Krul. If one considered the situation as locking up David in the break area, Alice's sacrifice was essential.

"...It's been a long time since I moved by myself."

Recently, no matter where Kagami went, he had always been accompanied by Alice, Krul, and Rex, so compared to that, Kagami felt like he was walking in an exclusive Staff hallway when walking in the Casino by himself.

Although he hadn't been with Rex, other than the times when they headed out, Alice and Krul were different. From morning till evening, no matter where they went or where they ate, the two of them had always accompanied Kagami.

Even when they rested in their own rooms in an inn, without any particular tasks to do, they did enough to remain there. Alice, who tried her best to avoid being forcibly taken back by Menou, didn't return with him, and Krul, who rented a room in the same inn, didn't even try to leave his room, even when it was time for them to sleep or when she didn't have an individual task to do.

Perhaps it was thanks to David coming with them, but recently, although he would come to take her back as soon as it became night, the three of them ended up waking up together every day, regardless of fatigue.

"How long has it been since I lost my private life, huh?"

Rather than escaping from David's observation, Kagami considered it to be running away from the two of them, but he was satisfied with the feeling of freedom that came with being alone, which he hadn't felt in a long time.

As he slowly walked while in good spirits, his head held high, his feet took him towards the main hall so he could tidy up the play equipment, which were the main attraction of the casino.

The one who was in charge of the Casino's main hall was Menou. He was skillful enough to be abnormal, and perhaps it was due to his remarkable memory, but he was almost too exceptional as a Casino Dealer.

In the beginning, everyone had tried their hand at being a Card and Roulette Dealer, in order to decide who was the most competent as a Casino Dealer manager, and it turned out that Menou was the most suitable.

Therefore, the management of the Main Hall staff, the education of the Casino Dealer staff, and the management of the halls had all been left to Menou.

"I want...a break. I want...comfort...Rest...comfort...res...comf..."

These were Menou's only words.

Recently, Menou had been working too hard without any rest. They wouldn't make it in time for the opening if he didn't work this hard.

In the beginning, the total number of Staff recruited had been 40 people; however, since it was clear that they didn't have enough hands to manage the Casino on a 24-hour system, with David's suggestion, they doubled the amount of people. It was now 80 people.

Although 50 of them would work as Casino Dealers, the inexperienced staff that didn't know how to be dealers needed to be taught.

The existence of a leader who could teach Casino Dealers and train Casino Staff within this short period of a week was essential, and regrettably, Menou had filled this role, even during his sleep hours.

Although, in the beginning, he had been working diligently for the goal of earning 10,000 Gold to rescue the Demon King and to quickly save up funds for Alice's daily life, it was clear that the liveliness in his eyes had vanished recently. Although he had taken one-hour breaks, he seldom summoned Alice, so he seemed to be approaching his limits.

Currently, he was shuffling cards splendidly enough to captivate the eyes while moaning "Uu...aaah" like a zombie.

“T-...This is? K-Kagami-dono? I-I’ll go to Alice’s side immediately!”

The moment Kagami was reflected in Menou’s eyes, the liveliness instantly returned.

“She isn’t here.”

However, with these words, Menou’s liveliness instantly vanished from his eyes.

“So? How are you feeling? Does it look like we’ll make it in time for tomorrow’s opening?”

“Fu...haha, there is no need to worry about it. I have finished the education of the humans I am responsible for.”

“I-Is that so...Then, why don’t you take a break already, Menou?”

“What I finished was just the guidance of the humans...I still haven’t finished...instructing the Staff about maintaining the equipment for tomorrow...I can’t rest yet, Kagami-dono.”

Although Menou recovered some of his vigor as he said this, it was clear he was in bad shape. His eyes weren’t in focus, a small amount of saliva was dripping out of his mouth, and his face showed that “he was a completely dead person,” in the words of Kagami.

“Guidance Instructor Menou! The preparations for the tables and equipment have been completed!”

“Guidance Instructor Menou! The preparations for the slot machines have been completed! The setting of the initial jackpot frequency has also been completed! We’re ready to go...whenever!”

Beside him, who looked like a dead person, were two female Staff members, dressed in full Casino uniforms and looking like orderly Knights trained by the Kingdom’s Army, who had rushed to him to report that.

“T-This is Owner-dono! I didn’t realize it was you, please forgive my rudeness!”

As soon as they saw Kagami, the two Staff members knelt in place and bowed.

These movements were like those of Knights who were fully trained to serve a King.

“...Menou, what exactly are you teaching them?”

“Of course, in general, I taught them the manners of a Casino Dealer, as well as the essential manners and etiquette to serve the owner, how to fight as the owner’s shield, and how to conduct themselves in defending the land we possess if, by chance, we were attacked. I do admire how well they have been raised within this week.”

“Is that so? So you were actually an idiot.”

Part 6

After that, Kagami instructed Menou to go home and rest immediately. The remaining Staff members, who were preparing and cleaning the facilities, had continuously told him to come again tomorrow morning.

After that, he walked towards the Bar. Although the Bars were located in the Main Hall, they were only basic ones, and it was necessary to go towards Bar Street, next to the Main Hall, if one wanted to enjoy the atmosphere properly. There were lots of Bars set up around there, each separated individually by atmosphere and alcohol, and the management of all that alcohol had been left to Takako.

Although, at the moment, Takako was busy changing Alice's clothes, Kagami decided he should confirm if her work was progressing smoothly, so he went to go check the stores one by one.

Every time he entered a store, he confirmed that all of the preparations had been made, while feeling uncomfortable with the greetings of, "Owner! Good work!", that the Staff members had been giving him.

"As expected of Takako-chan...it's been completed perfectly...Hmm?"

Kagami was feeling relieved, thinking, 'It was already fine,' when he saw it. Towards the end of the street where the Bars were lined up, a queer sign came into sight, one that even he couldn't understand. Although the exterior was similar to other Bars, the sign had queer letters written on it, reading 'Takako's Room'.

Kagami opened the door timidly, and took in a dangerous, intense smell.

Inside, he saw three tank-top, speedo-wearing lumps of muscle, who were cleaning the inside of the bar, Kagami instantly shut the door.

Deciding that he hadn't seen anything, Kagami headed towards the taverns located in an area opposite from the bars.

The taverns had been left to David to manage. It was more or less due to being unable to leave the business to amateurs, unlike Takako and David. The candidates for this were either Rex or David, since it would be bad if

rumors of the princess, Krul, working at a Casino spread.

However, Rex couldn't be relied on to work too much, since he was a hot-blooded person without any work experience who had been tempering himself since he was born, so Kagami decided that the management would be left to David.

By the way, Krul helped out with serving food at the taverns behind the scenes, and it was decided that Rex was to work as a part of the tavern Staff.

“...This is?”

When he walked into a tavern, there were bewildered Staff members sitting in chairs inside. After looking at the restless Staff members, he found Rex seated in the same manner and approached him, seeking an explanation about their situation.

“David-dono has...I have absolutely nothing to do, since he did everything in the morning.”

Rex muttered that. When Kagami looked around the inside of the tavern, it appeared that the preparations were complete. The menu had been properly prepared, condiments had been laid out on the tables to be used freely, and there was even a Recommendation Board in the tavern, which had ‘Today's Recommendation: Seafood Salad!’, written on it.

When he walked into the kitchen behind them, the appliances had been sorted into the appropriate locations, the food ingredients had been perfectly separated in the storage area, the necessary preliminary food had already been prepared, and large tubs with ice water had already been prepared for the alcohol that would be brought the next day. Certainly, there was nothing left to do at all.

“That uncle is too exceptional, it's scary.”

Kagami was bewildered, not understanding how someone could use their time to complete this by themselves.

Surely, if someone could do this, even Takako would fall in love with the guy. However, he couldn't neglect the Staff that wasn't doing anything,

and the Staff members replied with, “We’ve already done it five times...” showing expressions of bewilderment after Rex ordered the Staff to “Go clean it.” The tables were polished so much that they were shining, proving their statement.

“Disperse.”

After all, it couldn’t be helped that they had nothing to do, so Kagami instructed the Staff to disperse and to restore their energy for tomorrow. Then, he headed towards the Chapel that had been established in the casino. Rex said that he would help out if there was any unfinished business left, so he accompanied Kagami.

The Chapel was located in the center of the Main Hall, and the passageway was lined with taverns and bars. Tina had suggested that she didn’t need any help with the Chapel’s preparations, so she had been working on them by herself.

“Ah, Kagami-san! Rex-san!”

After the two arrived at the Chapel, Tina, who had been carrying cardboard boxes diligently, approached them, and gave them a bright look. The Chapel preparations were mostly complete. Even an altar had been established, and there was cloth spread on the benches lined up in front of it.

“That looks heavy, TinaTina.”

After Kagami said this, Tina forcibly pushed the cardboard boxes onto Kagami.

“If that’s what you think, then please help out.”

When Tina said this, Kagami and Rex divided the work of carrying the boxes of fortune charms that were in the middle of the Chapel and carried them towards the storeroom in the back. Although the weight wasn’t cumbersome, it was troublesome that they had to go back and forth several times, and they regretted that they had ordered a bit too much in small amounts.

At the same time, Kagami admired Tina, who had been carrying this

many without complaining at all.

“Besides helping out with placing the goods, everything had been left up to you. Specifically how you plan to use this Chapel?”

“Rather, why do you, who created this Chapel, lack plans for it?”

“I thought Tina would do it for me.”

“Please put that into effect after telling me about it, before you make a Chapel.”

Tina puffed her cheeks and said that while staring at Kagami. At that moment, Tina looked away from him, and with a ‘yareyare’, she let out a sigh. She then presented a stack of documents to Kagami.

“Even if it’s a Chapel, there’s a church in this city, and since it’s not necessary to take in orphans nor live here, the miscellaneous duties only include cleaning. After that, there are the Staff who will sell the merchandise that was imposed by Kagami-san on a 24-hour schedule. I already requested David to make arrangement for this, so it’s fine now.”

“Huh, will there not be any sermons and the like? Having people gather several times a day and preach about god’s teachings?”

“You’ll be damned if you expound on god’s teachings in places like a Casino, you know? Even though they would be cursed at best, what would you do if the people who were utterly defeated vented their resentment on me in the Casino?”

As this was said, Kagami confirmed his understanding with an, “I see.” Just because there was a Chapel in the Casino, Tina had tried to defend the town’s Church, even though she had no relation to it. Kagami would reconsider if it was bad to preach god’s teachings here.

“Hm? Then what plans, exactly, does Tina have for this Chapel?”

“I, Krul-san, and Rex-san, will help out by cooking behind the scenes. This will help out the town’s Church.”

“Eh, then there really wasn’t any meaning in creating this Chapel. Look, make it more like a Church, at least prepare a Confession Booth and listen

to confessions.”

“Confessions are done by the Holy Father, and not someone like me, a woman! In the first place, I’m still in the middle of training.”

“Well, let’s create a new religion here, and make rules so that Tina can listen to the confessions.”

“No.”

Tina frowned at Kagami’s proposal and replied immediately.

Kagami, who wanted to put the Chapel to use since he had taken great pains to build it, held his head at the very Tina-like response, and searched for a positive method of using the Chapel in the Casino.

“Ah...That’s it. How about a Consulting Booth? Instead of asking for forgiveness from the gods, you would simply be a consultant who would heal the hearts of those who were utterly defeated. No matter what their losses are, you will try to make them think about wanting to come again.”

“Isn’t it better for someone else to do the consulting?”

“Well, even though we’ve spent a month together, I think the one who listened to me the most was Tina. Compared to Takako-chan, I think it’s easier to talk with you. You’re so sensitive that you even react to trivial things.”

After Kagami said this while pointing at her, Tina blushed in embarrassment going, “...uuh,” and then became silent, without denying it.

“Shisou, what about me? Even I have confidence when it comes to talking.”

“Five out of the eight people in our group can speak better than you, so don’t talk.”

“I’m not better than those people!?”

“Well, putting Rex aside, let’s have you do a test run once.”

Ignoring Rex, who he had unintentionally shocked, Kagami clasped his hands together and said that to Tina, as if he was beseeching her

earnestly. After she showed him a slightly worried look, he let out a sigh and said:

“...It will only be once, you know.”

He then entered the room which was built in the Chapel for listening to confessions. Kagami walked further and entered an adjoining room inside of this room.

Inside the Confession Booth, there was nothing but a chair, and after Tina and Kagami faced each other, separated by a thin wall, they sat in the chairs that had been placed there.

“So what does Kagami-san want to consult about? It seems unlikely to be about worries, though.”

“Let’s give them a formal performance since we took great pains to build it. Tina, talk like a Saint for a bit.”

After Kagami suggested this, Tina frankly muttered “Eh...” unpleasantly. However, after considering that it would only happen once, she coughed violently, and even though she couldn’t see him, she switched her state of mind to a more serious one.

“Lost lamb, speak of the worries that trouble you so.”

She said that courteously. Kagami’s expression became serious upon encountering Tina’s unexpected manner of speech, and he slowly opened his mouth.

“I...even though it’s a Casino I built myself, I ended up leaving its management to other people. As a result, awful stores have been built with beings who are only lumps of muscle. What should I do about it?”

“Please live strongly and healthily.”

These were the only words Tina said.

Part 7

“You two...this is fine already. It won't change that much.”

As for Alice, whose outfit design was dependent on Takako and Krul, 30 minutes had passed since Kagami had left the break room. Alice couldn't suppress her feelings of wanting to run away from the situation, where they were constantly changing her clothes, which were nearly the same every time.

“You can't! It's important to dress up the parts that you can't see. Dignity can be born if you consider the combination of colors, you know!”

“That's right, Alice-chan. If this becomes a Casino where many nobles walk around, they could look at your every nook and cranny with their indecent eyes, and they won't be blamed for it. When I was added into the party as a Princess...oh how I realized the appearance of my body! You're the face of this Casino, Alice-chan! They will be able to look at you!”

Although Alice tried them on after Takako and Krul had tried persuading her several times, the two of them didn't waste a moment and prevented her from running away, so Alice showed them a weak-looking expression with an ‘...Au’.

Although David looked at this scene with a smile, Alice was only strangely ashamed by him. She momentarily thought, ‘He is watching me stand on my feet for an hour, but is he not busy?’

“You two, an hour has almost passed. Although you two have the stamina of an adult, Alice-sama is still a child. I think it's about time to wrap this up.”

Just as Alice thought that, David took a step towards her and helped her in a timely fashion. Although Alice's expression brightened for a moment because of this unexpected help:

“Please, David. Just a little bit longer! This is for Alice-chan!”

“Hohoho! It can't be helped then!”

As Alice pleaded with her eyes pointing upward, David gave up on

helping her, smiling happily compared to earlier. When she saw this, Alice looked like she had given up on wanting to say something at all and let out a small sigh, uttering, 'Kagami-san...Please come back quickly...'

"However, Krul-sama, your mood has changed quite a bit. A long time ago, you didn't show any interest in things that you could bind yourself to, but you are now personally trying to find some."

Krul blinked at David's words and showed a bewildered look, as though she had not realized her change personally, and responded with 'I-I see?'

"Alice-chan has a unique charm to her. I haven't changed, you know."

"Well, of course Alice-sama is attractive, but I'm not just thinking about that. I've been watching Krul-sama for a while, but with Kagami-sama... Krul-sama changed after meeting him on various occasions."

After saying this, David had a sad expression on his face, as if he was remembering the distant past.

When Krul heard the word 'Meet,' she thought that certainly might be the case and brought her hand to her chest, wearing a reserved smile.

"I also think that. It doesn't mean that the way you speak and your personality itself has changed...and rather than saying that there isn't any point in arguing about it, umm...You looked at me for who I am. I think that Krul-san is a very special person to me, one who also trusts me!...I might have never said this, though."

Alice tried her best to tell that to Krul, as though she was supporting David's words, while Krul gestured and felt embarrassed about the changes he had stated.

While she was confused about this, she felt some warmth gathering in her heart. When she finally realized it, she smiled happily and placed her hand on Alice's head.

"Well, I'm happy that you said that for me. I wasn't aware of it, but I couldn't expect my current way of life, compared to how I lived in the past. Even if I did expect it...I had thought that it was hopeless."

Krul remembered the first time she had encountered Alice while she said this. Although Alice had been a companion she had once wanted to kill, with the reason of 'she was an unreasonable Demon', Alice had now said that Krul was an 'important person' to her. Krul now felt that she was intimate enough with Alice to want to protect her.

When comparing the past and the present, it was strange enough for her to wonder why she had wanted to kill Alice without listening to her, so she recognized her own changes. She had thought that it was necessary to kill Alice. This was natural, since she had been taught that this was the world's ploy, after all.

She had lost the ability to think for herself. Although there had been times when she began to think about it, she had immediately abandoned thinking about things that she felt compelled to do. It had been the same since Rex had brought Krul with him, and when she had become companions with Palna and Tina.

If anyone were to say that she had changed, then the causes for those changes were obvious. It was the meeting with the unexpected Villager. Krul clearly thought that the beginning of everything was her encounter with Kagami.

In the beginning, she had been confused. However, she immediately understood that he was a happy person. When Balman was under attack from the Demon King Army, he protected her from her careless actions, which had nearly harmed her people, and he strictly scolded her for them.

It was the first time for her. The first time someone had immediately objected to her decisions as a Princess and given her a chop on the head. She might have been interested since that time.

Before she had realized it, Krul became aware that it was useless to think about such things. Kagami always did everything he could do. There were people who had protected Demons with all of their power as well. Even though it was obvious that he would have to cut down those from both sides for his path to happiness, she had come to question herself, asking 'Is the me of today truly correct?' when she saw the times Kagami became

worn out while trying to stand against others.

Surely, she would have immediately answered that it was 'correct' before she met Kagami. It was simply that the encounter with Kagami had been a huge shock for Krul.

"Values are easily changed from one's experience...rather, it would be strange if they didn't change."

Takako said, with a smile on her face, as if backing her up. It was as if Takako was declaring that change was never a bad thing.

"That's right...It's stranger to not change."

For some reason, David's expression darkened as he replied to Takako's words.

"However, Krul-sama has pushed forward with her resolve to subjugate the Demon King ever since her childhood. Although the goal is to save up money, if it were the Krul-sama of the past, perhaps she would have been here with a tense expression, trying to stick to her beliefs more. Perhaps she would have continued on a separate path..."

Even though it would be strange otherwise, and even if it was strange for Krul to not be like that, Alice felt strange when she heard David, who looked like he wanted to say something, and tilted her head. Certainly, when she had first met with Krul, as well as the times after that, she had felt that Krul was living to chase after something, and she didn't particularly think that someone changing after gaining experience was anything special.

"Encounters can change people. Either good or bad."

Takako muttered, as if she understood him.

"You know...for that reason...your existences...are especially amazing for Kagami-sama."

Whether or not he thought that from the bottom of his heart, Alice somehow understood David, who had said that that with his eyes shut. Since Kagami was a someone who could change things by himself, she felt

that changing after meeting him wasn't anything special. That's how she interpreted it.

“David-san, you are also trying to change after meeting with me.”

“Is that ri...huh? Huhhhhh?”

When Takako, who looked like she was deeply moved by him, muttered that and approached David, sweat flowed down from his forehead, and he showed a smile. From Takako's tone of voice, she had entered her 'Pushy Mode', since he was thinking about her. Alice, who had uttered the same words earlier, sensed the change and looked at David with pitiful eyes while muttering 'Good luck...David-san.'

Part 8

“Pardon my rudeness, but it’s about time for the last order of imports to arrive, so please allow me to be excused. I must help out with bringing them in, so I will return later on. If it’s fine with you, Krul-sama, I would be happy if you just waited here.”

David avoided this with a god-like timing and what could only be thought of as an excuse. However, his expression turned serious and his speech became polite, so his standard performance couldn’t be called a lie.

Although David didn’t normally try to leave Krul’s side, he needed to complete his work perfectly. Even if he did a good job, it was better for it to be done slowly, and all the people present had interpreted that his tidying up quickly, with all his might, showed that the time he spent beside Krul was important to him.

Therefore, Takako couldn’t say anything about David, who was using his valuable time to try and tear himself away from Krul.

“Geez, we’ll wait at the break area, so come back here once you’re done. Let’s go eat breakfast with everyone as a preparatory celebration for the Casino’s opening.”

“Hoho, I’ll look forward to that. I’ll go tidy it up in a jiffy.”

Then, David departed from the break area as if he was running away. With a maiden-like face that didn’t suit her sturdy physique at all, Takako saw David off with a look of envy.

This scene reflected into Alice’s and Krul’s view for a moment, but they immediately looked elsewhere.

“W-Well then...shall we continue?”

The moment Takako grabbed onto Alice’s shoulder with a face full of smiles, she realized that she had lost her one hope of trying to resolve this situation, and her eyes lost their vigor.

“Ara...? That David, it looks like he forgot his gloves.”

However at this time, Krul approached a table in the break area as if she

had noticed something, and then she took the work gloves on the table as she said that.

“Hey, has David-san always had these gloves?”

“Well...it’s normal for David to cover his hands since it’s hot and humid...but not having gloves may hurt his hands today, since he said that his work involves carrying the imported goods. Perhaps he had considered that and prepared them in advance.”

Alice’s vigor was restored as she listened to this, and then she quickly took the gloves away from Krul as if aware of something.

Alice immediately realized that this was a chance to escape that David had prepared for her, and rather than letting herself get caught, she quickly took action.

“David-san must have these or he’ll be in trouble, so I’ll go take them to him!”

“Wait, Alice-chan! I’ll do it!”

Although Takako had yelled that out desperately, Alice quickly departed from break area without listening to her. It was impossible to chase down Alice, who had left immediately, without wasting her breath to argue, and after the chance passed by her, Takako held a handkerchief in her mouth and vented her regrets with all of her power.

“I’m glad...As expected of David-san. Although these clothes are hard to move in...it’s a lot better than being restrained by those two, I’ll have to thank him properly later.”

Alice muttered that after she left the break area, and walked in a passage built exclusively for the casino staff. Looking at the gloves she took from Krul, she thought, ‘Does David’s work really involve carrying the imported goods?’

“It would be troublesome...without them.”

Although the gloves had probably been prepared to help him out, thinking about the possibility of him not having them, Alice began to run

in search of David.

//

Several minutes later, she had searched in all of the places where he could be within the Casino, but she couldn't find David anywhere.

She even went to the place where they were receiving the imports, but the staff members present said that the goods had yet to arrive and thought that he was surely working in another area. There had not been any staff there, besides the one who had tried to return to the passage that was lined with taverns after finishing their work, and the staff members who liked Alice and gave her candy.

While walking in the Casino's halls, most of the staff members who had tried to return had offered information that they had seen David, but even if she headed to the places where they said they saw him, David wouldn't be there, nor at the bar where she had thought he would head to, and she ended the search upon getting pats on the head and receiving candy from the cleaning staff.

She was finally unable to guess where he'd gone, and although she tried to confirm if he was in the suspicious shop that was named 'Takako's Room,' Alice immediately closed the door 0.5 seconds after opening it, and then headed to the Chapel.

Tina was in the Chapel, but she hadn't seen David, and the ones who had come by were just Kagami and Rex, and after the two of them had helped out a little bit, they had gone somewhere else.

"I wonder where...David-san is."

Alice, who had received a lot of candy while walking through the Casino, had her hands full of candy and the stuffed animal from Kagami. She walked to the nearby area with the warehouse, which was located outside the Casino.

She had begun to think that, if she didn't find him here after searching all this time, he surely would have passed by her once his work finished and he might have already returned to the break area.

“...and then...by this.”

At this time, a familiar voice entered Alice's ears. She raised her head, and, after looking at many trees near the warehouse, she saw David and a man, who seemed to be part of the staff, conversing.

“Found you...! David-san!”

Alice felt deeply moved at finally finding him after spending a long time searching for him, and she waved her hands and rushed towards him as she yelled that out.

David immediately heard Alice's yell, and after he looked towards Alice, he shrugged with an ‘oya, oya,’ and ended his conversation with the staff person before walking towards Alice.

“...Ah!”

However, at this time, perhaps it was due to rushing while both of her hands were occupied, but she ended up tripping.

“D-...Dangerous!”

Seeing Alice tripping, David, who had concluded that she would get hurt, immediately rushed towards her, and tried to reduce the distance before Alice fell.

Although he was a Merchant, David, whose level was 77, succeeded in easily closing the distance, and supported Alice's body. However:

“A...wa.”

When he supported her, his hand caught on the ribbon that was tied on Alice's hair on the back of her head, and just like that, David ended up taking the cloth that suppressed the magic power of Alice's right horn.

At that moment, the distinctive magic power of a Demon began to flow out from Alice's horn little by little, like overflowing bubbles drifting in the air. Although Alice hid her horn in a hurry and separated from David, the magic power that had begun to flow didn't escape his notice, and David still held the cloth that suppressed magic power in his hands.

David's expression had changed from his regular smile. He was rather

calm, as if confirming it, and his expression changed to one which could only intimidate her. Alice, who had given up all hope after seeing his silent expression, became paralyzed with fear and fell down on the spot with a 'petan.'

Then, with a, "What should I do," as tears formed in her eyes, Alice desperately struggled with the thought of being found out.

"...That's a splendid ornament. Was it a present from Kagami-sama?"

"...Huh?"

However, facing these unexpected words, Alice blinked in surprise.

The horn that grew on the right side of the back of Alice's head was no longer concealed by the cloth and was completely exposed. However, David undid his earlier expression, smiled again, and then he extended his Alice to Alice, who had fallen.

Presently, magic power was flowing out from the horn as if it were floating. As expected, it couldn't be passed off as a Blue Devil's horn. Yet, David had said that as if he didn't care about it.

"Y-Yeah. Kagami-san made this for me."

Alice replied to him while avoiding meeting his eyes.

After that, David nodded once with a smile, as if indicating he was fine with this, and then he handed the magic power absorbing cloth, which he had accidentally taken, back to her.

"I see...wrapping the cloth around this deals with it nicely, it must be something precious to you."

Despite being clearly revealed as a Demon by the magic power that was emitting from her horn, Alice received the cloth and was dumbfounded by David, who had become quiet without asking why there hadn't been any magic power flowing from the horn until now.

After she received it, Alice quickly and hurriedly tried to wrap the cloth around her horn, since she didn't know if someone else would pass by. However, she couldn't wrap it skillfully, since whenever it had come

undone, Takako or Kagami would be there to put it on for her.

“Hoho, if you’re fine with it, allow me to help out.”

Whether or not he thought Alice’s flustered manner was strange, David said that with a pleasant smile and helped Alice wrap the cloth around her horn.

“It’s perfect like this. The ribbon suits you quite well, and you have the same beauty as Krul-sama did when she was a child.”

“T-Thanks.”

Alice expressed her thanks, with a slight stutter, towards David, who didn’t need to say anything else.

“Well then, I will also head towards the break area after this. I still have some work left to do, so I will return as soon as that is done. If you are searching for Kagami-sama, it’s probably better for Alice-sama to return, since earlier, he had mentioned that he would head to the break area.”

David said that and turned back after listening to Alice. He then tried to leave.

Although Alice had heard David, who wore a foolish look, she once again rushed toward David the moment she heard him, as if remembering something and:

“U-...Um!”

Saying that, she handed the work gloves over to David.

“Oh, well, well. You took the trouble to deliver these to me. Thank you.”

He received the gloves like usual, and David said, “Well then,” and tried to leave just like that without asking anything else.

Towards this, although she couldn’t get the words, “Why did he not ask about it?”, out of her throat, she reconsidered that he might have pretended not to realize it. She closed her mouth once, and then:

“I-I’m the one who should say thank you!”

To make up for that, she said just those words to him.

After that, David looked back at her, and after putting on a satisfied, happy smile, he replied, "It's not a problem," and then vanished into the Casino.

Alice was filled with emotion after seeing his smile, turned around, and once again, lightly walked towards the break area where Kagami was located.

Part 9

“This isn’t something you should be saying so casually, Kagami-dono! It’s dangerous to leave it alone!”

Alice returned to the passage exclusive to the Casino Staff again and tried to turn the knob to the door of the break area. However, at that moment, she heard yelling from inside the break area, and just for a moment, Alice shrunk back.

She slowly opened the door and peeped inside, as if wary of something. Inside stood a restless Krul, Takako, and Rex. Kagami was also there, seeming troubled by something as he stood with his arms folded, and Menou, wearing a stern look, had tried to grab Kagami’s shirt collar.

“Please calm down, Menou-chan. I understand your eagerness, and while that may be true, she would have tried to let you know first if she had to run away or hide.”

The appeasing Takako, who spoke with a serious expression, seemed like a completely different person from the one Alice had seen when she left the break area.

“Everyone. D-did something happen?”

Although she had become slightly insecure when she thought that they were having a dispute, Alice entered the break area as soon as she saw that it wasn’t the case and asked that question timidly. The attention of everyone in the room gathered on her. As soon as he saw Alice, Menou approached her in the blink of an eye and took her hand, seeming relieved from the bottom of his heart.

“I couldn’t see you, and you worried me, Alice-sama! I’m glad you’re safe!”

“I said I was going to hand David-san his gloves didn’t I? You’re over exaggerating things.”

Seeing Menou’s nervous response, Takako shook her head saying, “yare, yare.”

“Come, Alice-sama! Let’s go to a land far away from here, together, just the two of us! Everything will surely be handled by Kagami-dono later on!”

“Eh...no way. I don’t want to be separated from Kagami-san’s side.”

After Alice replied to Menou with a blunt denial, he received damage to his soul and yelled out, “Guhah!” However, he immediately recovered and said, “That’s not something you should be saying so casually!”, as if he was at his wits’ end.

“Calm down, Menou-chan. Alice-chan still doesn’t know anything, remember?”

Takako pulled Menou away from Alice, as if suppressing him, and said that. Feeling tired, he then uttered, “Mu...that’s right. Sorry,” as he seemingly calmed down a bit.

“But Shishou, if what Menou says is true, then won’t it be bad for several reasons? At the very least, if Menou’s and Alice’s identities are discovered, surely, it won’t just be us who will be sorry.”

Rex said that as he faced Kagami with his arms folded, as though something was wrong. Towards this, Kagami just groaned, “Hmmm...” and didn’t say anything.

“That’s why, please tell me, too, if something happened! Did something happen while I was away?”

Alice, who had become anxious while trying to process the story after being left out, yelled that.

“I’ve heard Menou talk about David being a spy for the Kingdom, though.”

Kagami said that with a sigh.

“A spy...of the Kingdom? David-san is?”

As she listened to Kagami, Alice’s face distorted in disbelief.

“It was when he accepted Kagami’s kind offer, and tried to return after changing his clothes. David-dono was strangely cautious of his surroundings, even in the Tavern he was in charge of. I thought it was

unnatural to head off somewhere that wasn't the delivery point, so I followed him. And then...there was a spy wearing a Staff uniform as a disguise near the warehouse."

Listening to Menou, Alice immediately recalled David and the conversation he had with the Staff member near the warehouse. Since it was something she had personally witnessed, the hope that Menou was mistaken, was crushed.

"Was that person...truly a spy? Was he truly in disguise?"

"There's no doubt about it. I heard them speaking with my own ears. 'Here, this is the information that should be relayed to the King. At the moment, Rex-sama and Krul-sama have not shown any suspicious movement,' and then I definitely saw him handing over a document of some sort. Without a doubt...he ran away since he suspected that someone was listening in on him."

After Menou utter that seriously, Alice, who usually didn't know how bad these events were nor what kind of impact they would have, could somehow feel the gravity of the situation.

"It might not be impossible...if it's David-san. I do admit that David was superior in completing work without waste in the past."

Krul uttered that restlessly.

Takako and Kagami then understood the meaning of this instantly.

This excellent and talented person did have the obligation to observe Krul, but it was impossible to act useless when helping out with Kagami's work. There wasn't a need to virtually cling to them in order to observe them if his job was to 'confirm whether or not they were working every day for the Demon King subjugation.'

In other words, there was a reason for these things.

"...observing Alice...huh?"

Kagami scratched his head, looking troubled, as he muttered that.

Kagami had always thought that David was reluctant to separate from

Krul's side. However, he was now questioning if that was true, and if his real goal was Alice.

The issue was the source of the information leak. Kagami had willfully believed he was Krul's observer, but could it be that he had been wrong, and David had actually been observing Alice?

"Although the Kingdom's side doesn't know anything...they appear to be doubting us a bit."

If that was really the case, then the Kingdom knew Alice's origins, and there was a possibility of it being exposed. At the very least, the Kingdom doubted Alice.

What information did they receive that made them doubt her?

Part 10

It was hard to think of other people who had heard the conversation between the Demon King and Estellar at the battle of Salumeria. Kagami himself had confirmed that there was nobody in the surroundings. If there really was anyone who had his or her ears open during that situation, Estellar probably would have dealt with them quickly.

However, it was only Kagami who knew this. Although there was value in just asking about it, even if he was refused, when considering whether this was true or not, this knowledge wouldn't be taken seriously with just one person's evidence. If he considered that David was concealing himself, then the possibility of it being him was high.

"Hold on, Master. Why does this show that he is observing Alice?"

Rex asked and inclined his head.

"What I mean is that Menou said 'Guys,' right? Even if he were just observing Krul and Rex, isn't it weird to go to the point of also reporting things about us? He even said 'suspicious movements,' like he suspects us."

After Kagami said that, Rex also showed a serious look and muttered 'I see,' as if he understood.

"There's not much meaning in observing Kagami-san, who has nothing to hide. Takako-san and Tina as well. But...it's different for Menou-san and Alice-chan."

It was clear that he was behaving suspiciously. The one who felt this the most was Krul. David had always been beside her, and recently, she had felt something strange from his looks.

He had looked at her differently. Perhaps this truly was about Alice. Considering David was reporting about things other than Krul and Rex to the Kingdom, it was clear.

"But I...even though David-san was investigating my actions from the shadows, I can't imagine him reporting this to the Kingdom. As expected..."

he isn't just observing Krul-san's actions."

Alice uttered this, as if something had come to mind.

"Why do you think so?"

Kagami asked, thinking she might have confidence in her words after seeing Alice's expression.

"My horn...David-san saw it, but he didn't say a word about me being a Demon. It looked like he planned on keeping silent about it, and already knew that I'm a Demon."

Everyone that heard Alice's words gave her bewildered looks. Only Menou grabbed Alice's shoulders while trembling, and said:

"As I thought, let's run away from here immediately!"

Although he had stated his desire, Takako immediately pulled Menou away from Alice, and calmed him down once again.

"Eei! Release me, Takako-dono!"

"I understand your panic, but calm down, Menou-chan. It would be suspicious if only the two of you left, right?"

After Takako said that, she confirmed with Kagami, asking "Right?". Kagami nodded his head, as if he had considered it, and said, "Well, that's right."

Although Kagami had considered that David was a dangerous existence that shouldn't be provoked, he reconsidered a bit after listening to the story about David seeing Alice's horn.

"Menou...you heard David say, 'No suspicious movements have been discovered,' right? Even though he knows Alice is a Demon, isn't it weird that he said that?"

"This...He only acted calm for the moment, and in reality, there is also the possibility that it was the first time he had gained proof of her being a Demon. I'm sure he will say that Alice-sama is a Demon in the next report."

Although there was certainly a possibility that David had been acting, when Kagami saw Alice's anxious expression, he couldn't believe that that was the case at all. It was because he saw "I can't believe that he would do such a thing," written all over her face.

"There is still the possibility that he is protecting Alice. If that's the case, it might be troublesome for David if the two of you were to vanish, and make him unable to protect you two."

"David doesn't have a reason to protect Alice-sama, does he? Although I don't know what it is about us that he's investigating, he went out of his way to come here for a job from the Kingdom. There is no reason for him to have come here to protect her."

Menou immediately denied Kagami's suggestion. Menou's words were reasonable. There wasn't any reason to protect her. The probability of it being true was also low when considering Krul's words about him efficiently completing his work.

At that moment, Kagami directed his gaze at Alice and inclined his head, as if asking her, 'How about it?'. Alice, who noticed his gaze, showed him a slightly worried expression, but gave him a determined nod. Seeing this, Kagami became eager with a, "Yosh," and:

"If he observes us, then let's observe him. If he reports that Alice is a Demon in his next report, then we'll consider it again. For now, let's trust David."

After saying this, Kagami declared, "Well then, let's go wait for David's return, and go eat dinner," while ignoring the atmosphere.

If Alice were to consider trusting David, saying, 'It's all right,' then Kagami would support her with all his power. This would definitely be progress for the goal of coexistence between Demons and humans. That was the reason for his behavior.

Although Menou seemed momentarily troubled by these words, he uttered, "Understood," while watching Alice, who looked happy listening to Kagami's declaration. Then he let out a sigh, as if it couldn't be helped.

Takako was the one who volunteered to keep a lookout, so they decided to leave it to her, since her movements were good and she had high physical abilities, like Kagami.

Although Kagami didn't care if Takako had her own reasons for volunteering, it wasn't a problem for him, so he brushed it off.

It had been one week since the day before the Casino's opening. Not once did David relay that Alice was a Demon to the Kingdom's spy. The only thing he would report was, "No suspicious movements have been discovered."

Credits

Translator: [Xant and Minions](#)

Epub: [Estevam](#) / [dotNOVEL](#)